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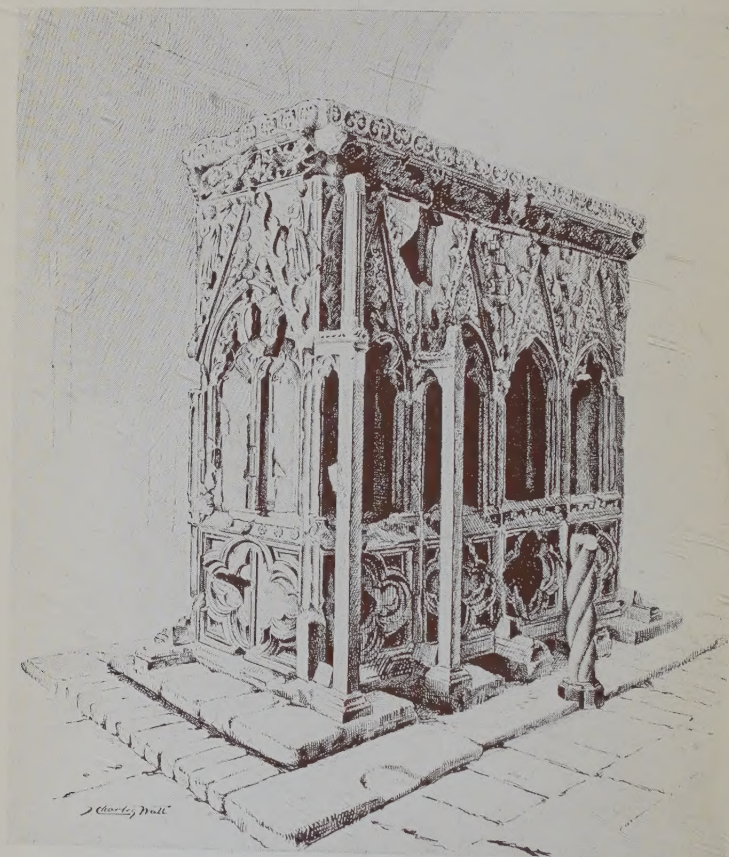


THE FIRST CHRISTIANS OF BRITAIN









SHRINE OF ST. ALBAN.

# THE FIRST CHRISTIANS OF BRITAIN

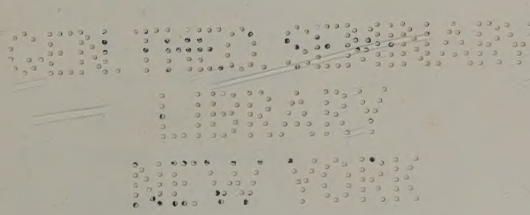
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BY

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## FOREWORD

FOR long centuries keen interest was displayed as to how, when, and by whom Christianity was introduced into England; a subject which has in later years been regarded with such placid indifference as would accept the explanation that was given by an Anglo-Saxon priest when preaching in Wales on the festival of St. John ante Portam-Latinam in the twelfth century. Giraldus Cambrensis tells us that the priest described how it was St. John who first brought the Gospel to Britain, because *ante* means "before," or "the first;" *portam* "he brought;" *Latinam* "the Latin tongue," and of course *to Britain* was understood.

Possibly the present indifference is due to the dogmatism with which partisans uphold their opinions in matters where definite decisions are clearly impossible.

Most people speak of this momentous gift as brought by one man, or a company of men, and dispute to whom we are indebted. Some attribute it to one or another of the Apostles; others to the medium of King Lucius, who is promptly dismissed as a myth by the greater number of writers; and the most popular theory—that St. Joseph of Arimathæa was the bearer of the tidings of great joy—is now said to be mere legend.

Few seem to realise that the news of Christ may have filtered into Britain through many channels, especially merchants and soldiers; indeed, individual soldiers would seem the most probable medium when the composition

of the Roman army, the British dealings with foreigners, and the wide-spread—although few—monuments of Christianity over Roman Britain are considered.

Notwithstanding ruthless destruction by the hordes of pagan Anglo-Saxons and modern utilitarians there are various remains, both material and documentary, which witness to a vigorous Christian Church, with its confessors and martyrs, as existing in Britain at a very early date.

It is our object to bring these various evidences together, not as a dry list of documents, repelling to a reader of limited leisure, but as different traditions on which he may exercise his powers of criticism to distinguish the probable from the impossible.

The Christianity of Britain, Ireland and Scotland—the three countries differed little from one another in this respect—has been described as Paganism with a veneer of Christianity. This is a libellous statement except in so far as many customs and some phraseology were adaptations from the pagan. The British Church made a strenuous and successful fight against paganism with scarcely any support from the rest of the Western Church, from which, indeed, it was at one period almost isolated; a fight with native, Roman and Saxon heathenism.

Neither so learned, subtle of speech, nor refined in manners as the people of Rome or North Africa; with no such champions as a St. Augustine of Hippo or a St. Jerome they fought a good fight and spread the Gospel with amazing rapidity, and then sent men across the seas, even into Northern Italy, to do the work of the Cross which Italians, so near to Rome, had failed to do. Let us give them their due, and as to mistakes—from which great pontiffs in the East and West were not free—let the conditions under which they laboured and bled in the service of their Saviour be remembered.



Fustel de Coulanges said that the true object of history-studies is the human soul; and we peer through the haze of great difficulties to find when the souls of the peoples of the British Isles were first awakened by the Gospel of Christ, and who were the responsible instruments bringing that great light.

In the absence of any very early native written document the records of general history as told by the Latins of the first few centuries, together with archæological remains, open to us the first view of British Christianity. Legends and traditions which at first sight appear untrustworthy, on analysis are found to contain many germs of truth; and the oral traditions of Wales, which were not written down until the eighth century, are comparable to the Norse and Icelandic Sagas.

Even Geoffrey of Monmouth, utterly discredited as a historian, enshrines some truths in his once popular writings, and we cautiously venture to quote certain things from his pages, agreeing with his friend Wace, the Norman poet—"Not all lies, nor all true, all foolishness, nor all sense. So much have the storytellers told, and so much have the makers of fables fabled to embellish their stories, that they have made them to appear all fable" (*Roman de Brut. vs. 30038*).

Dates are sometimes at variance as well in the first as the twentieth century, but in the earlier period that alone need not be taken as vitiating a statement; while general evidences and harmony in main facts should receive consideration.

From the British Church Ireland received the faith, and from both Britain and Ireland the Gospel was carried to Scotland; it was the Church of the Keltic people. In the period here treated the Irish were known as Scots, so

that the terms British, Irish, Keltic or Scotie are equally used by various authors to denote the early Church in these islands as distinct from the foreign organisations.

This is in no respect a history of the Keltic Church, and only a few of her leading names are introduced in a search for the origin and growth of British Christianity.

J.C.W.

## A Traditional and Historical Chronology.

*In many cases approximate dates only are given.*

A.D.

- 51 Caradoc and family taken to Rome.
- c61 Bran the Blessed returned to Britain.
- 61 Aristobulus came to Britain?
- 63 Joseph of Arimathea landed in Britain?
- 66 Martial in Rome.
- 80 Agricola contemplated the conquest of Ireland.
- 177 Irenæus, Bishop of Lyons.
- c179 Lucius sent for Missionaries?
- 208 Tertullian's Testimony to Christianity in Britain.
- 222 Cormac Mae Art raided N. Britain and was baptised.
- 239 Origen's testimony to Christianity in Britain.
- 256 Mello, a Briton, Bishop of Rouen.
- 293 Christian epitaph to Carausius.
- 303 Constantius tested the fidelity of Christians.
- 303 Diocletian's persecution started.
- 304 Martyrdom of Sts. Alban, Amphibalus, Aaron, etc.
- 312 Constantine's march against Maxentius.
- 313 Edict of Milan.
- 314 Council of Arles.
- c315 Eusebius said that some Disciples came to Britain.
- 325 Council of Nicæa.
- 326 Helena found the Holy Cross.
- 343 Irish raided N. Britain.
- 347 Council of Sardica.
- 358 Hilary of Poitiers declared Britain free from heresy.
- 359 Council of Rimini.
- 360 Irish and Picts raided N. Britain, and ruled it for ten years.
- 363 Athanasius said that Britons conformed to Nicene faith.
- 367 Chrysostom witnessed to Christianity in Britain.

- 369 Theodosius organised defences against Irish,
- 383 Maximus took all able Britons to Gaul. }
- 395 Ninian at Whithorn, mission to Picts.
- 397 Death of St. Martin of Tours.
- 397 Ninian dedicated the *Candida Casa*.
- 400 Jerome asserted that Britons were orthodox.
- 400 Pelagius went to Rome.
- 409 Romans finally withdrawn from Britain.
- 410 British pilgrims in the Holy Land.
- c423 Theodoret testified to Christianity in Britain.
- 423 Pelagius met the Irish Coelestine in Rome.
- 429 Germanus and Lupus came to Britain.
- 431 Palladius consecrated by Pope Celestine.
- 432 Palladius landed in Ireland, and fled.
- 432 Patrick landed in Ireland.
- 445 Foundation of the Church of Armagh.
- 447 Germanus and Severus came to Britain.
- 450 Jutes invited to Britain.
- 457 Jutes spread over Kent.
- 461 British bishops at Council of Tours.
- 465 British bishops at Council in Vannes.
- 477 Ella, the Saxon, landed in Sussex.
- 495 Cerdic, the Saxon, in Hampshire.
- 501 Port, the Saxon, at Portsmouth.
- 504 Progress of Saxons arrested at Mons Badonicus.
- 511 British Bishops at Council of Orleans.
- 519 Fridolin's (Irish) Mission to Germany.
- 528 Anglo-Saxons take Verulam.
- c547 Gildas wrote his "Epistle."
- 547 Ida, the Angle, invades Yorkshire.
- 550 British Mission to Sts. David, Gildas and Cadoc to  
Ireland.
- 555 British Bishops at Council of Paris.
- c560 Gildas wrote his "History."
- 561 Battle of Cooldrevny over MS. of Columba.
- 563 Columba went to Iona.
- 565 Columba carried the Gospel to the N. Picts.
- 569 Council of Llanddewi-Brefi.
- 569 A British see already founded in Spain.

- 572 A British suffragan to Archbishop of Braga, Spain.
- 573 Kentigern in Strathelyde.
- c575 Bishop Luidhard accompanied Bertha to Kent.
- 580 Venantius Fortunatus testified to orthodoxy of Britons.
- 586 Theonus, last British Bishop of London, fled before Saxons.
- 586 Thadioc, last British Bishop of York fled before Angles.
- 590 Columbanus and Companions went to Gaul.
- 597 Death of Columba.
- 597 Augustine landed in Kent.
- 597 Augustine consecrated Bishop.
- 601 Augustine received the Archiepiscopal Pall.
- 603 Augustine met British Bishops at "Augustine's Oak."
- 604 Mission of Mellitus to the E. Saxons and London (Latin)..
- 604 Justus made Bishop of Rochester (Latin).
- 604 Laurence consecrated to Canterbury (Latin).
- 605 Archbishop Laurence and letters to British bishops.
- 613 Massacre of British monks of Bangor.
- 616 Mellitus expelled from London.
- 616 Justus fled from Rochester.
- 616 }  
to } London was Pagan.  
654 }
- 619 Mellitus recalled and succeeded at Canterbury.
- 625 Paulinus consecrated to York (Latin).
- 626 Angles spread over Midlands.
- 627 Edwin of Northumbria baptised at York.
- 630 Mission of Felix to E. Anglia (Latin).
- 633 King Edwin slain, his son apostatized.
- 633 Paulinus fled to the South.
- 634 S. Ireland adopted Roman Easter.
- 634 Birinus (Irish-Latin) converted Wessex.
- 635 Aidan of Iona Bishop of Lindisfarne (Keltic).
- 652 Keltic Mission to Middle Mercia.
- c653 Glastonbury, etc., conquered by Saxons.
- 654 Cedd made Bishop of E. Saxons (Keltic).
- 655 Conversion of Mericnas by Oswy (Keltic).
- 655 Dinma Bishop over Mercia and Lincolnshire (Keltic).





# THE FIRST CHRISTIANS OF BRITAIN

## CHAPTER I.

### THEORIES.

**A**LTHOUGH the British Isles enshrine countless relics of their industry and art the ancient Britons are a much maligned group of races; yet no people can be found to have used their limited opportunities, either secular or religious, to better advantage. The more they are studied—either as pagans or Christians—the greater respect is conceived for their intense thoroughness.

The religious element was always strong within them, and their enthusiasm prompted the raising of such huge temples as Avebury and Stonehenge. At Stonehenge they exercised the art of modern construction in making joints by mortise and tenon in stone with stone implements, and orientated the Temple according to their working knowledge of astronomy.

In the age of metals Britain was the University of Druidism, and Caesar says that "This institution is supposed to have been devised in Britain, and to have been brought over from it to Gaul; and now, those who desire

to gain a more accurate knowledge of that system generally proceed thither for the purpose of studying it" (*De Bell. Gall. IV. xiii*).

It was in the same spirit of fervour that, as soon as the Britons heard of Christ and His saving grace, they quickly saw—as by inspiration—the aim and purpose of the great Sacrifice of the Cross and the futility of their previous worship.

No sooner had they heard of Christianity from individual converts, even from units in the Roman army, than they worked to obtain accredited teachers, and to carry the message to near kinsmen in Britain, to distant kinsmen in Ireland, and to their foes in that land which is now called Scotland.

So little is really known of the origin of the Church in Britain or who were the first teachers of the Gospel in this land, that various theories have been promulgated. For many centuries it was held that St. Joseph of Arimathæa first brought Christianity to Britain and that Bran the Blessed carried it from his exile in Rome into Wales; but in the volcanic disruption of convictions and institutions in the sixteenth century a doubting generation arose.

Biassed historians combined history with falsehood, or suppressed facts opposed to their purpose. As heresies multiplied old beliefs were made subjects for scorn, and later critics refused to see any foundations for traditions or folklore, and thus discarded anything which had been transmitted orally from one generation to another before history was recorded in writing. Following this, many early writings were condemned by those who failed to distinguish the legendary accretions on undoubted facts, and recognised nothing that would not suit their conceited dogmatism.

In late days two theories predominate, and much has been written as to an Eastern or Western source of Christianity in Britain under the terms Ephesine and Petrine—from Ephesus or Rome—in other words as to whether the episcopal succession was received through St. John at Ephesus or from St. Peter.

Very many details in the fragments of Liturgies which are extant, and various ceremonial observances which are gathered from the earliest book left to us, and a few archæological examples—such as the position of a bishop's fingers in giving the benediction—are indisputably of the East. All these facts combined, however, are not sufficient to support an "Ephesian" origin in the usual sense of receiving the Apostolic succession from St. John at Ephesus; on the contrary, the source of all these things is obvious, and will be explained in future pages.

Christianity originated in Palestine, and thus was—in a general way—Eastern, and in its early years the Church of Rome, the Western Metropolis, was equally Eastern, as also was the flourishing primitive Church of Alexandria, whence issued a tremendous influence over the rest of the, then more limited, Christendom.

All Christianity then issuing from Rome was the same as the "Eastern"; it was carried to far distant lands and there took root, growing independently of the mother stock in non-essentials, and it became autonomous in each country. The conditions of the times compelled it. No general councils could then assemble under the prevailing state of the Roman Empire, and some of the branches of the Church were isolated; they could not receive letters of exhortation and encouragement as did the Romans, Corinthians, etc., consequently they did not

march in the progress of secular and scientific enlightenment as in the centres of culture—in Alexandria and Rome—but retaining the earlier Catholic customs they were, in a few centuries at variance with reformed observances, as in astronomical calculations, etc.

Thus, in the computation for the observance of Easter, the British Church was at one with the rest of the Church when the early Councils assembled in the years 314, 325, 347 and 359. But the eruptions of the Anglo-Saxons and their persecutions involved the Britons in internal trouble and re-organisation, they were forced to become self-centred, and that, together with the cessation of communication with the continent, led to their ever greater isolation. Thus they remained in ignorance of the improved computation for Easter which Rome received from Alexandria, and in all innocence they could not understand the accusation of error made by the more enlightened Augustine, whom the British regarded as an intruding foreigner, seeking to usurp dominion over an ancient Church. In time they received the same Easter as all Western Christendom.

This difference over Easter is one of the points used by the advocates of Ephesine origin, who seem to hold their views because they are anti-Roman, forgetting that whether the succession came through St. John, St. Peter, or St. Paul, they all received them from our Lord.

Certainly the succession went from St. John through his disciple, St. Polycarp, to Eastern Gaul. St. Polycarp sent Irenæus, Pothinus and others to spread the faith, and they came to Lyons, of which city Pothinus was made the first bishop. To make the journey the missionaries probably took ship; the overland route from Ephesus, near Smyrna, through those countries now known as



Turkey, the Balkans, and North Italy would have been arduous and long. If they went by sea they would reach Lyons through Marseilles, where a Greek colony had long been established. The commercial route, the most direct and easiest, was up the River Rhone to Lyons.

Lyons was distinctly a Greek centre of Christianity, the names of its early bishops and martyrs were Greek, and the earliest inscriptions which remain are in the same language.

The persecution under the Emperors Antoninus and Marcus Aurelius attained its greatest severity at Lyons, Vienne and the neighbourhood (Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl. v.c.i*). This was about the year 175, and it continued for a considerable time. To escape the rage of the pagan populace many Christians fled northwards to Autun, Dijon and Langres. All these cities are on the eastern side of France, and there is no evidence that any of these people of Greek origin came into contact with the British, and for the Ephesine advocates to say that any of the refugees came to Britain is pure surmise.

One thing only gives superficial encouragement to those who plead for a Greek origin of the British Church, and that is to be found in the words of Bishop Colman of Lindisfarne, uttered at the Council of Whitby. In his speech concerning Easter he said they kept that which they had received from St. John (*Bede iii-25*). This reference to St. John may be traced through St. Joseph of Arimathæa, and is explained by the letter of Polycrates to St. Victor (see p. 167).

Then there is the Gallican theory. Certain learned men suggest that the Church in Britain was a daughter of the Church in Gaul; but it seems to be an ill-considered conclusion.

Constant commercial intercourse between Britain and Gaul was an established fact before Julius Cæsar made his first visit to these shores. Diodorus Siculus (*Hist. v.*, 22, 38) and Strabo (*Books ii & iv*) speak of the export of tin and general exchange of commerce with Gaul; and communications were established with Marseilles long before the time when St. Joseph is supposed to have come thence to Britain. Christianity may have become known to the Britons through the traders, but this is not the origin inferred by the Gallican theorists, they mean rather that the priestly and episcopal line was derived from the Church of Gaul.

Britain was very deeply indebted to the Gallican Church, which was an assisting factor in spreading the faith and extirpating heresy in the British Church; but not as the source of her being. The Gallican Church was itself in dire distress, and Gregory of Tours says that a great missionary effort to spread the Gospel through Gaul was made about the year 250.

The Gallican influence in Britain is seen in the following events:—

St. Martin of Tours gave help and advice to St. Ninian as he returned from Rome in 394; and he was venerated by the Britons, who dedicated churches in his name. Fortunatus, the sixth century poet, declared that St. Martin was beloved by the Spaniard, the Moor, the Persian and the Briton.

St. Hilary did much to confirm the faith in Britain, and one of his hymns was inserted in the British *Liber Hymnorum* and the Bangor *Antiphonary*.

St. Germain of Auxerre rendered inestimable assistance when, with Lupus of Troyes and Severus of Treves, he twice came at the call of the Britons to refute the heresy

of Pelagius; and he is said to have ordained St. Patrick.

The British Church used the "Gallican Psalter," which is the second revision by St. Jerome. At Rome the first revision was used until 1566, when the second was adopted; thus Rome followed the lead of Gallicans and Britons.

Many of the Gallican Councils were attended by the bishops of Britain; they were present at Tours in 461, Vannes 465, Orleans 511, and Paris 555, by which they kept in touch with a wider world than insular Britain, and benefited from converse with other prelates.

This intercourse influenced the British for good, but it cannot be said that their Church was derived from Gaul. At a later date it was France that was indebted to Britain, who gave her Mansuetus, an Irishman, as the first bishop of Toul, and sent forth her missionaries, without stint, for the conversion of the Gallicans and the neighbouring tribes of Teutons.

Thus it is seen that beyond the fact that all Christianity came from the near East, that many Eastern customs, especially monastic, came through Marseilles and Lerins from Egypt and Syria, and in the eighth century from the monks exiled by the iconoclastic Byzantine emperors, no special Greek origin can be found for the British Church which was not common to all Christianity.

Then perforce must the eye turn to Marseilles for St. Joseph, or to Rome whence St. Paul is said to have sent Aristobulus to Britain, from whence also the reported appeal of Lucius was answered by the sending of bishops, and where Sts. Ninian and Palladius received consecration for their work in North Britain and Ireland.

Roman persecution under Diocletian only served

to inspire the British Christians to more strenuous work, and the Church spread all over Britain. The ravages of the Anglo-Saxons with their instinct for killing obliterated the Church in all Eastern Britain, driving the natives into the fastnesses of Wales and Strathclyde, and the forest-guarded tracts of Somerset, Devon and Cornwall; where the influx of bishops led to a reorganisation on a diocesan basis. Ireland was protected from the Saxon scourge by the sea and spread the faith until it was temporarily checked by the depredations of the Danes. In Scotland the Church seemed to have failed in the face of overwhelming heathendom; this was however but for a time, and from Iona and Glasgow the Gospel was carried amongst the wild clans and across the yet wilder waves to the Shetlands, Hebrides, Orkneys, and to Iceland.

Smarting under the brutality of the Saxons, the British bishops in Wales refused to acknowledge the claims of Augustine, who appeared to them as an interfering and proud foreigner; and Augustine, accustomed to the refinements of the Eternal City and the respect due to the various degrees of the hierarchy, failed to grasp their attitude; and when they refused to co-operate with him in preaching to the Saxons he uttered dire threats, thereby alienating them for generations.

But if the Britons did not accede to Augustine's request to preach to the murderers of their kindred, it was not because they neglected mission-work, which was, indeed, their one vital principle, braving great hardships to carry the Kingdom of God to others. And when the bishops of Augustine's line failed, fleeing before the apparently hopeless task of winning souls, Mellitus from London and Essex, and Paulinus from Yorkshire, the Brito-Irish Church stepped into the breach, seating a

bishop at Lindisfarne who supervised Northumbria and as far north as Edinburgh, ministering to those whom the Latins had forsaken, and sending bishops—Cedd to the forsaken field of Essex and London, and Chad to the wild Mercians in the Midlands. Thus did they answer the taunt of Augustine—by feeding the sheep which his shepherds had left to the wolf.

Gradually the Brito-Irish Church gave up its insular prejudices before the extending enlightenment of wider experience, and was merged in the Latin Church. But still the Keltic priest has greater power to influence the Welsh and the Irish than anyone of Latin or Teutonic lineage can ever hope to accomplish.



## CHAPTER II.

### INTERCOURSE BETWEEN BRITAIN AND OTHER COUNTRIES.

**I**N tracing the source of British Christianity, how it entered and permeated the land, the state of the country in the time of Christ and in the first few centuries following His ministry should be considered in order to realise how far it was isolated or to what extent it was in communication with the Church in other countries.

Britons of the south and south-eastern coasts had for long held commercial intercourse with countries beyond the sea; with the Phœnicians, with the Greek colonists of Marseilles and of Narbonne, and with the people of Gaul before Julius Cæsar began the subjugation of Britain in his second visit in B.C. 54.

There was also some sort of martial alliance between the Britons of Kent and Essex and the Gallicans against the Roman arms in Gaul, which gave Julius Cæsar the pretext for invading this island.

For many years after this Britain was left free from foreign invasion, but meanwhile the maritime Britons were increasing their dealings with Gaul, and experiencing various phases of Roman culture as it spread over western Europe. Two British kings and a son of Cunobeline made personal visits to Rome, indeed Strabo says that many princes sent embassies, or themselves came to Rome

and received the friendship of Augustus, that almost the whole of the island was in intimate union with the Romans.

During this period the ministry of Christ was working in the souls of men in the far-off Roman province of Judæa. The great tragedy of the Passion and Crucifixion of our Lord, with the accompaniment of unusual natural phenomena, agitated Jerusalem, and started those expanding ripples, or waves, throughout the world which spread to Britain, and are still spreading for the salvation of mankind.

It was only ten years after the Crucifixion that the Emperor, Claudius, sent his general Aulus Plautius to conquer Britain, and for this purpose he provided four legions of the army, the 2nd, 9th, 14th, and the 20th. In these legions there is no doubt that some of the soldiers had heard of the new Prophet as reported in Rome, and how Pilate was recalled to answer for the tumult under his governorship.

The Emperor Claudius shortly followed his general to the shores of Britain to direct the military operations, and among other native chieftains who submitted to him was Arviragus, King of the Dobuni, a tribe occupying the country on the east side of the River Severn. This king, who is associated with Joseph of Arimathæa, was left to rule over his people as tributary to the Empire.

One important chieftain, Caradoc (latinised into Caractacus) was a strong opponent of the Roman army, and against him the emperor sent Ostorius Scapula, who at length overcame him. Caradoc fled to the queen of the Brigantes, who, to find favour in the eyes of the conquerors, betrayed him to the Romans.

In the year 51 Caradoc and his family were carried captives to Rome, where the noble defence of the British

chief secured their release. Possibly Caradoc returned home, but tradition says that his father Bran was retained as a hostage for seven years, and that his grand-daughter Eurgain—who, out of compliment to the magnanimous emperor, took the name of Claudia, probably at baptism—is said to have married Pudens, a senator.

Then Nero, in A.D. 59, sent Suetonius Paulinus as governor of Britain, with additional troops; the 14th legion was recalled, but was sent back by the Emperor Vitellius and finally withdrawn by Vespasian. These movements of the troops probably brought them into contact with Christians, and many of the soldiers thus influenced would quietly hold the faith and take every opportunity of spreading it.

The defeat of the 9th legion by Boudicca (Boadicea) and the burning of Colchester, Verulam and London in A.D. 61 must have been the talk of Rome, so seldom had the Roman arms met with such a reverse. At this time St. Paul is supposed to have been in Rome; but the dates are very uncertain; his arrival is said by different authors to have been in various years from A.D. 56 to 63. After two years in chains and further travels he was again in Rome and was martyred about the year 67 or 68. Now St. Paul was attached by a thin chain to his constantly changing guard in his own "hired lodging," and receiving visitors until his release; he would thus be in the company of many of the soldiers and no doubt he would talk over these events in Britain and converse with some of the British, either now or after his liberation.

About this time Martial, the Spanish poet, also was in Rome, and made Britain the theme of some of his epigrams, and it may be gauged how famed Britain was among the Romans when Seneca, the brother of Gallio

(mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles, xviii, 12-17), invested money in Britain; whilst commerce increased, and the epicures of the world's metropolis clamoured for oysters from Richborough, in Kent (Juvenal *Sat.* iv.), while both Martial and Juvenal tell us that the ladies of Rome who craved for British pearls, were not satisfied unless they had examples of British basketwork (*Epig. xiv.*; *Sat. xii*).

The arrival of Julius Agricola in Britain with more troops in the year 78, with which he overran Britain and Caledonia, and the coming of the Emperor Hadrian with the 6th legion in A.D.119, established the Romans throughout the country. The land was divided into provinces with three principal cities—York was the seat of the *Vicarius Britanniae* and of the Administration; the Colony of London was the great centre of commerce; while Caerleon, known to the Romans as Isca Silurum, near Newport, Monmouthshire, was the metropolis of that division *Britannia Secunda*. These three cities became the chief episcopal seats of the British Church.

Antoninus and Severus added to the auxiliaries of the 6th legion; and the last named emperor, who kept his court at York, died there in 211.

After this, various emperors reigned, and were disturbed by rebellions, until Constantius Chlorus defeated the usurper Alectus and recovered Britain for the empire. He was favourably inclined towards the Christians, but when a great persecution was commanded by the Emperor Diocletian, in 303, he could not restrain the local governors from obeying the imperial decrees, and many in Britain suffered death for the faith.

Both Eusebius (*Life of Constantine I. xvi*) and Sozomen (*Eccl. Hist. I. vii*) relate how Constantius made

an experiment by which to gauge the loyalty of the Christian troops:—"He called them together and told them that if they would sacrifice to idols as well as serve their God they should remain in his service and retain their appointments, but that if they refused compliance with his wishes, they should be sent from the palace and scarcely escape his vengeance. When difference of decision had divided them into two parties, separating those who consented to abandon their religion from those who preferred the honour of God to their present welfare, the emperor determined upon retaining those who had adhered to their faith as his friends and counsellors; but he turned away from the others, whom he regarded as unmanly imposters, and sent them from his presence, judging that they who had so readily betrayed their God could not be faithful to their king. Hence, as Christians were deservedly retained in the service of Constantius, he was not willing that Christianity should be accounted unlawful in the countries beyond the borders of Italy, that is to say, in Gaul, or in Britain."

Under such a father and a Christian mother—Helena—was Constantine taught. He, also, found the Christians in his army were the most reliable of the troops, and his first imperial decree was issued in favour of Christians. Under the monogram of Christ he conquered Maxentius in 312, and published the Edict of Milan giving liberty of public worship in the year 313.

Other persecutions, as under Julian the Apostate, were of minor extent and did not directly affect Britain.

The Roman army now became the protector of the British against the Picts of Scotland and the Scots of Ireland until its final withdrawal in 409.

During the period here summarised it is clear that



Christianity spread widely over Britain, and this was certainly through the Roman legions and auxiliaries; but to see how this was done the Roman military methods should be known.

## CHAPTER III.

### THE ROMAN ARMY.

THE military organisation of the Romans was designed with the view of alienating all sympathy between the army of occupation and the conquered. The fighting men of an invaded people were taken away to other countries and set over those brought under the Roman arms, thus depriving each country of men of military value whose patriotism might prompt them to seize an opportunity to rise against the conqueror; and to garrison it with those who had no interest in the freedom of its people. Roman legions were thus accompanied by bodies of auxiliaries, or troops raised from the various subdued nations.

This system is clearly shown by Tacitus and other Roman historians, and is borne out by the numerous memorial stones to foreigners found in this and in other lands. Thus British troops were taken to Wallachia, Dacia, Bessarabia, and, indeed, into every nation of the known world under the standard of Rome.

As early as A.D. 55 Nero had raised troops in Britain for the subjugation of the Parthians; Galba attached British auxiliaries to the 1st and 2nd legions; Vitellus took 8,000 men from Britain against Otho; and more than 100,000 Britons were taken by the usurper Maximus Clemens, in 390, to support him in his attempt to secure the imperial purple.

We are told by Tacitus that before the battle of the Grampians, the Caledonian king, Galgacus, made a speech to inflame the spirit of his warriors against the Roman invaders, in which he said:—"Our children and relations are by the laws of nature the most dear of all things to us, these are torn away by levies *to serve in foreign lands.*"

From historians and memorials it is known whence came the auxiliaries which were quartered on the British; but best of all is the "Notitia," which contains an account of the disposal of the Roman military over the various countries of the empire.

In Britain there were stationed troops from Belgium, Gaul, Germany, Switzerland, Spain, Portugal, Bavaria, Dacia, Macedonia, Cilicia, and Thrace; cohorts of boatmen from the Tigris, the Danube and the Euphrates; Syrians, Dalmatians, Arabs, and Moors from the north of Africa. Many other nationalities are named, so numerous that almost every tribe of every country were united to subject the Britons to the Roman Yoke.

Now many of these troops were brought from countries into which the Apostles had penetrated; some of the legions which were sent from Rome had witnessed the public spectacles of Nero, in which Christians were put to horrible tortures, and their martyrdoms were the subject of gossip in Rome and in all the central countries of the empire.

By these means a great number in the army must have heard of Christ and His teaching, and many of them had received baptism, this is proved by the test of Constantius at York, already recounted. And when they were sent to Britain, far from the centre of persecution, though probably subject to it in a minor degree from their

pagan comrades, they would quietly, or openly, spread the word of God amongst the natives with whom they were in constant contact. Surely this body of nameless missionaries, stationed as they were over all Britain, must, as laymen, have been largely instrumental in spreading Christianity, and preparing the ground for the advent of the priests.

Auxiliaries from Spain, a people who were amongst the first to hear of Christ, were stationed at Chester; the second legion was at Caerleon, a place associated with the martyrs Julius and Aaron; and here a stone was found commemorating Caius Valerius, the standard bearer of the second legion, who was a native of Lyons, where a Christian colony from Ephesus was settled under the Bishop Irenæus. The thought arises as to whether this Valerius had brought the Gospel tidings from Lyons, and was the standard-bearer of the Cross as well as of the legionary emblem.

While the faith became known in Britain probably, in part, by commerce and certainly by the army, there is concrete evidence that it was long before the time of Constantius. About A.D. 208 Tertullian wrote:—“In all parts of Spain, among the various nations of Gaul, in districts of Britain inaccessible to the Roman arms but subdued to Christ, in all these the kingdom and name of Christ are venerated” (*Adversus Judaeos*, 7). And a few years later, in 239, Origen asks:—“When, before the coming of Christ, did the land of Britain hold the belief in one God?” (*Homil. iv. in Ezek.*). Again:—“The power of the Saviour is felt even among those who are divided from our world, in Britain,” etc. (*Homil. vi. in Lucae*). He also explains that his words are not to be taken to imply the complete Christianisation of the

island, as "very many have not yet heard the word of the Gospel."

Some seventy-five years later Constantine the Great bears witness to the same:—"Beginning at the remote Britannie ocean, and the regions where the sun sinks beneath the horizon in obedience to the law of nature, through the aid of divine power I banished and utterly removed every form of evil which prevailed, in the hope that the human race, enlightened through my instrumentality, might be recalled to a due observance of the holy laws of God, and at the same time our most blessed faith might prosper under the guidance of His almighty hand" (*Life of Const. II.*, xxviii.).

Our British historian, Gildas, in his own pessimistic manner, supports the above writers in the wide-spread knowledge of Christianity in this land:—"Christ's precepts, though they were received but lukewarmly by the inhabitants, yet they were held entirely by some, less sincerely by others, even until the nine years of persecution under Diocletian" (*Hist.* §9).

## CHAPTER IV.

### ARCHÆOLOGY.

NOW there is other proof of a different character, archæological proof, that Christianity was known over Britain at a very early period of this era.

This proof is the existence of an early form of the monogram of Christ's name. Representations of the Cross may be adduced in evidence, but they are not altogether reliable, as a cross was one of the most easily made of ornamental forms and was largely used by the heathen of this and other countries to decorate their domestic utensils and war-like implements. The cross and the circle were always the two most popular figures thoughtlessly made by idle hands or purposely drawn in children's games—as "naughts and crosses" of the present generation—so that it is not safe to take any casual cross-form as indicating a reference to the Christian religion.

In the case of the *Chi Rho* it is very different; these two Greek letters—X (Ch) and P (R)—representing the first three English letters of the name of "Christ," and one imposed upon the other formed the mystic sign of a believer in the Saviour at a very early period, when a public exposition of the full name would probably have led to death in the arena.

This monogram, which is known as the *Chrisma*, was privately used by the faithful shortly after Apostolic



times. Two of the earliest known examples are found in the catacombs of Rome on the gravestone of the martyr Marius, A.D. 117, and on the stone of the martyr Alexander, A.D. 161.

Although the Emperor Trajan Decius was a persecutor of the faith this monogram appears on his coins issued between the years 249-251. Possibly his moneyer was a Christian, and the tolerance of the faith under the preceding emperor, Philip, may have emboldened him to introduce the symbol as a protest against the action of Trajan, who would recognise in it no more than the moneyer's trade mark.

Sometimes the *Chi* was figured as a saltire X, and sometimes it was made horizontally +; the last was termed the penal form and was especially used in Egypt. In the fourth century the *Alpha* and *Omega* were sometimes associated with the Chrisma.

Constantine's vision of the Cross, in which he was to conquer, which he saw in the noontide sky, and again in a dream in the night in the year 311, would seem to have been of this form. It was this sign he put on his standard, on the helmets and shields of his soldiers, and in which he conquered. The Chrisma was then displayed on the coinage of Constantine and of his successors.

The use of the Chrisma does not appear to have continued for any great length of time; it was no longer necessary to speak by symbols when Christians could openly worship Christ after the Edict of Milan in 313. It ceased to be figured in Gaul in the fifth century, and in Britain most of the examples may be considered as within the period ending with the departure of the Romans in 409. Thus we have an almost certain proof of the reality of the Christian faith in Britain within the first four centuries.

Two of these monograms were found in the ruins of a Roman house at Chedworth, Gloucestershire (Fig. 1). They are incised on two stones which formed the foundation of some steps, and it was suggested that they were placed in that position in reference to St. Paul's words:—"The foundation of God standeth sure having this seal" (*II Timothy ii. 19*).

A Roman villa which had evidently been the abode of an affluent Italian was found at Frampton, a few miles from Dorchester, in Dorsetshire, in which a large apartment with an apse at one end contained a very fine tessellated pavement. In the chord of the apse was a band of mosaic ornament, and right in the middle, in the position of honour, was a circle containing the sacred monogram (Fig. 2). In the pavement of the apse a cup was represented, in form it was an ordinary banqueting goblet, but it was also of the same shape as the early two-handled chalices used by the Church. This cup cannot be taken as a distinctive Christian emblem, but its position in the apse and its association with the monogram is suggestive (Fig. 2). On another pavement in the same villa a figure is pictured as spearing a serpent coiled around the trunk of a tree; this would pass without notice except that in conjunction with the other designs it may represent the Christians' combat with the Devil.

In two other Roman houses in the same county pavements were found containing symbols, but not of such uncertain significance as those already mentioned. One at Harpole, in Northants, has a figure of four crossed lines in a circle, similar to a mark found on some coins of Constantine II. instead of the usual monogram. It forms a sort of double *Chi* without the *Rho*, which is also seen on the coins of Justin I. and Justinian I.,



Fig.1. Chedworth, Gloucesters.

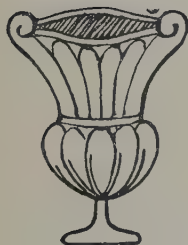


Fig.2. Frampton,  
Dorchester

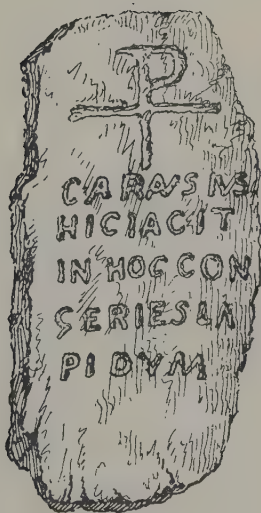


Fig.3. Stone of  
Carausius.

ROMANO-BRITISH OBJECTS BEARING CHRISTIAN SYMBOLS.

which are usually considered to be intended for the monogram.

Another pavement at Horkstow, Lincolnshire, contains some red crosses, which may be Christian or mere ornament, except that the whole design is a reminder of the frescoed roof in the catacomb chapel of St. Callixtus. In the centre is Orpheus, a figure symbolical of Christ emitting sweet music from a lyre to the souls of mankind, and at each corner is a head with a cross at each side; it is difficult to think that Christian symbolism was not in the mind of the designer.

A stone of peculiar interest bearing the monogram was found at Pen Machno, in Carnarvonshire. It is a monument to Carausius, and if this name can be identified with the admiral who usurped the Roman authority in Britain in 287-293, it would give a definite date to the monogram (Fig. 3). The evidence bearing on this identification is as follows:—

The Emperor Severus, who died at York in 211, had a son Bassianus by a British woman. The mother's brother, who was of course a Briton, betrayed Bassianus to the British army and their allies the Picts under the command of Carausius, who thus obtained the rule over Britain. The inscription—CARAUSIUS LIES HERE IN THIS STONY MOUND—is in all capital letters, this, and the method of combining some of the letters, were recognised features of his period.

A number of stones bearing the *Chi Rho* monogram are extant in Cornwall. At Phillack, or St. Felack, near Hayle, a stone is built into the gable of the south porch of the church. The circular disc bearing the *Chi Rho* is slightly raised with a bevelled edge above the stone, which, at that early period, shows a Roman influence (Fig. 4).

At St. Helen's Chapel, Cape Cornwall (St. Just in Penwith), is the head of a cross, probably a gable cross, with the monogram filling the whole head (Fig. 5). This fragment was found near the ruins of an early oratory, about 45 feet long and 12 feet broad, enclosed in a circular



Fig. 4. Phillack (*St. Felack*)

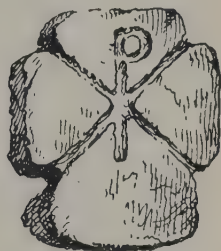


Fig. 5 St Helen's.



Fig. 6. Stone of Selius

#### ROMANO-BRITISH STONES BEARING CHRISTIAN SYMBOLS.

wall of stone. The dedication suggests that this oratory was founded shortly after the uncovering of the Holy Sepulchre and the discovery of the Holy Cross by St. Helena in 326.

When the chancel of the church of St. Just in Penwith, near Penzance, was demolished in 1834, a stone slab of granite from an earlier structure was found embedded

in the wall. It is inscribed *SELIVS HIC JACET*, and is supposed to commemorate Sellyf, a chieftain of Cornwall, who died in 325. On another side of the stone is the sacred monogram with a hook-shaped *Rho* (Fig. 6).

An upstanding stone at Southill, inscribed to the memory of *CVMREGNI FILI MAVCI* has two segmental lines incised in the upper part, the top one supporting the

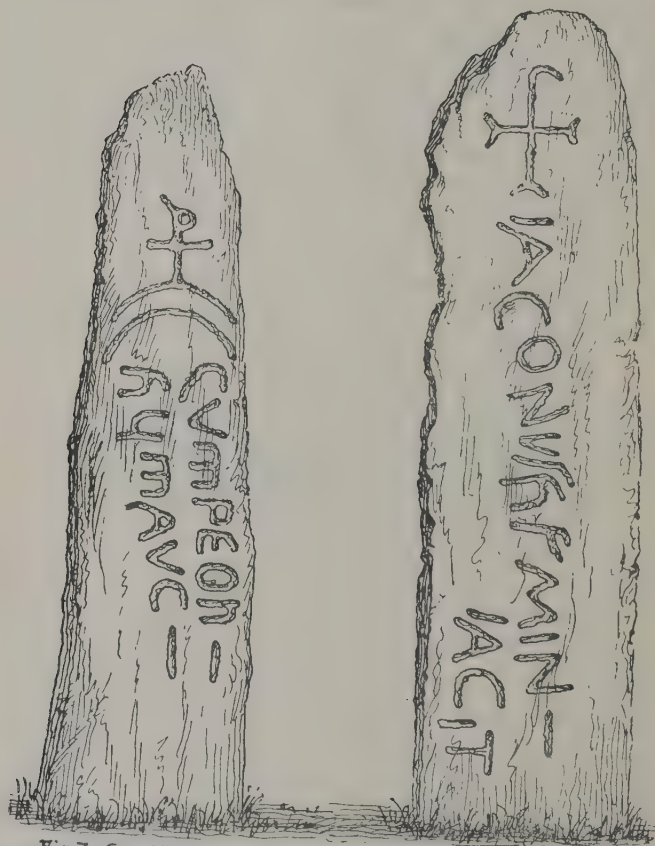


Fig. 7. Southill.

Fig. 8. Treflys.

ROMANO-BRITISH MEMORIALS BEARING CHRISTIAN SYMBOLS.



monogram, in which the *Rho* has a curious extension (Fig. 7), seen to a less extent in the Sellyf stone; while the arcs find a single companion on a stone at Welltown.

A stone inscribed to Jaconus (James) the son of Min, at Trefflys, Carnarvonshire, bears the monogram, in which the *Rho* is but partly formed (Fig. 8).

This monogram takes the place of letters in the first syllable of the word *Christianus* in the epitaph of Porius at Llech Idris, in Merionethshire:—PORIVS HIC IN TVMVLO JACET, HOMO (*Christ*) IANYS FVIT.

Near St. Ninian's monastery at Whithorn there is a stone, standing 4 feet high, on which a cross of peculiar form in Britain is incised, it is placed in a circle with a small *Rho* attached to its upper limb. The stone is inscribed LOCI (S)TI PETRI APVSTOLI (Fig. 9). The form of the cross and the dedication of that place to St. Peter recall to mind that St. Ninian was trained in Rome.

At Kirkmadrine, on the western peninsular of Wigtonshire, across Lucy Bay from Whithorn, there were three standing stones bearing the monogram. One of these is destroyed, but it bore the inscription:—INITIVM ET FINIS, "the Beginning and the End," the equivalent to Alpha and Omega; the other two remain. At the top of one was the Alpha and Omega, but it was deliberately fractured at the end of the last century, A ET only being left. Beneath the monogram is an inscription:—"Here lie the holy and excellent priests, that is, Viventius and Mauorius." The sacred monogram is repeated on the back. The other stone has part of an inscription remaining beneath the monogram, which reads (Piu)s and Florentius, which Bishop Browne suggests is a continuation of the writing on the first stone. Together they memorialise four bishops. Bishops of



Fig. 9. Whithorn.

Figs. 10, 11. Kirkmadrine.

## ROMANO-BRITISH MEMORIALS BEARING CHRISTIAN SYMBOLS.

St. Ninian's mission, of which the first two are the earlier, the symbols and the letters are distinctly Roman; the letters of the second stone of a little later date than the first (Figs 10, 11).

This original and primitive monogram, in which the initials of the Lord's title of "the Anointed" is made the theme, is found on certain objects of a smaller and portable character of Roman workmanship. A silver bowl with a flat horizontal rim was found in the Roman station of Corstopitum (Corbridge) in Northumberland, which had on the rim six equidistant squares, and in each square the sacred monogram was engraved (Fig. 12).

The same monogram is on a Roman seal of lead found at Silchester, Fig 13 (*Archæologia xlvi*, 363); on some pottery of red Caistor ware—made at the kilns of Castor in Northamptonshire—at Alnwick Castle; and on some discs of pewter taken from the Thames at Battersea (Figs 14, 15, 16). In two examples the monogram is accompanied by the word SPES, “Hope”; and another has the Alpha and Omega in rough characters.

A hoard of broken silver articles recently found at Traprain, Scotland, includes three objects bearing the Chi-Rho monogram; a stone at Kells, in Ireland, also bears it.

Other Christian objects of the Romano-British period include two rings, one found at Silchester in Hampshire, and the other at the military station of Branodunum (Brancaaster), in Norfolk, which is inscribed VIVAS IN DEO; and two silver rings from Fifehead Neville, in Dorsetshire.

A cross stamped in relief on the base of a bowl of Samian ware from the Roman Cataractonium (Catterick Bridge), Yorkshire, seems to be of too pronounced a character for mere ornament; but, at all events, it was imported (Fig. 17). Another cross, which is certainly of a set religious purpose, is on a pendant disc of lead which was found in a Romano-British burial at Dyserth Castle, Wales (Fig 18).

A more elaborate Christian device by a Roman craftsman is seen on a stone from Vindolana (Chesterholm) near the Roman Wall in Northumberland, where the 20th legion and the Tribune of the fourth cohort of the Gauls were stationed. It is a triangular stone, probably the top of a larger monument, the lower part of which contained the inscription, on which is sculptured a crescent,



Fig. 12  
*Corbridge*



Fig. 13.  
*Silchester*



Fig. 14.



Fig. 15.  
*Cakes of Pewter*



Fig. 16.

Fig. 18.



*Leaden  
Disk.*



Fig. 17. *Samian Bowl.*



Fig. 19. *From Vindolana.*

ROMANO-BRITISH OBJECTS BEARING CHRISTIAN SYMBOLS.

a cross, and a ball in the apex, beneath these symbols is a cockatrice, and in the remaining lower angle a loaf with a cross upon it, an exact replica of the oblation of bread as pictured in the catacombs and in early sculptures of the Institution of the Blessed Sacrament (Fig. 19).

Beyond the examples enumerated very few memorial stones of Christians can be identified during the Roman period. Some of the numerous early stones bearing crosses may be of the Roman period, but there is no certainty, though there are a great many which are pre-Saxon. Burials of that time are found orientated, but with no symbol it is impossible to say that they are of Christians.

Graves of the Roman heathen are frequently marked by stones bearing D.M., *Diis Manibus*, "To the gods of the shades," and occasionally pagan epitaphs begin with D.M.S., *Diis Manibus Sacris*, "To the Sacred gods of the shades"; but the absence of this dedication does not give ground for the supposition that other stones are Christian memorials.

Early Christian epitaphs frequently contained a short expression as, "*Vivas in Deo*," "*In Christo*," "*In Pace*," etc.; but very few are seen in Britain. "*Hic Jacet*" was the usual beginning of a Christian epitaph from the fifth century, and a few occur before that date; one of the earliest as yet found, was at Vindolana (Chesterholm) on the Roman Wall, in which the name is distinctly British—"Here lies Brigomaglos" (Fig. 20).

The Roman coffin of Valerius Amandinus, which was found in the ground to the north of the nave of Westminster Abbey church, is another witness to the Christian Church in Britain during the Roman occupation. The inscription, the form of the letters, and the shape of the cross on



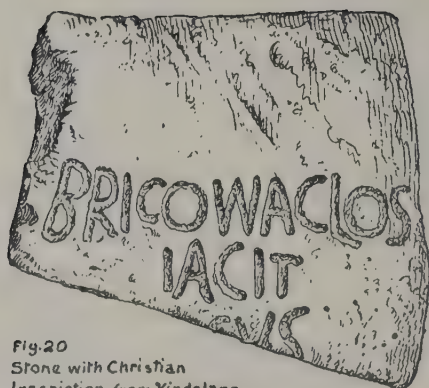


Fig. 20  
Stone with Christian  
Inscription from Vindolana



Fig. 21. Coffin of Valerius Amandinus

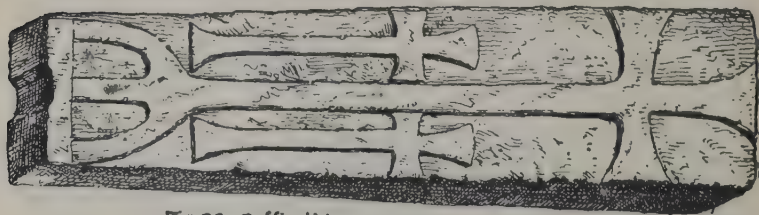


Fig. 22. Coffin-lid from Howell, Lincs.

# ROMANO-BRITISH MEMORIALS.



the coped lid, date it as of the latter part of the fourth century, probably of the time of Theodosius the Great, 380-400. It has been suggested that the cross was sculptured for another interment at a later date, but there seems to be no adequate reason for this. The wedge-shaped cross is consistent with monuments in Rome of this date, and the anchor at the foot of the cross is of exactly the same form as that emblem of Hope depicted on the earlier grave slabs in the catacombs (Fig. 21).

The lid of a coffin of a similar date was found, inverted, serving as a foot bridge over a ditch at Howell, near Sleaford, Lincolnshire. Here the crosses are of the same form as seen in Rome of the date 350. The Cross of Redemption stands forth from the other two crosses, which remind us that the cross was the penalty of criminals. It stands forth as the Standard of the Faith, terminating in a three-pronged base, exactly as the Roman standards were made, so that the prongs could be thrust into the ground. Standards with these prongs may be seen on the carved stones of the 2nd legion at Benwell and at Procolitia on the Roman Wall in Northumberland (Fig. 22).

## CHAPTER V.

### THE APOSTLES OF BRITAIN.

**M**ILITARY methods, documents and archæology alike unite in proving that Christians, numerous and widespread, were in Britain during the Roman occupation, even before many years had passed after the Sacrifice on Calvary, the dispersion of the Apostolic College, and the carrying of the Gospel into various countries, as commanded by our Lord.

Concerning Britain, only the presence of Christianity at this period is clear, apparently brought by laymen. An official ministry, however, was necessary for the consolidation and continuity, even for the very being, of a Church. No chaplains accompanied the Roman army before the time of Constantine, and nothing is heard of any priest being landed by ships of commerce; and the question arises as to who first came to Britain as an ordained missionary.

One thing is certain, some priest or bishop came to Britain during Apostolic times. St. Irenæus, the bishop of Lyons 177-202, who was the disciple of Polycarp, the successor of St. John in the see of Ephesus, says that the Apostles propagated Christianity to the boundaries of the world, and he particularly mentions the Iberians, or Spaniards, and the Keltic nations; in which last term Britain was included with Gaul by some classical writers.

Eusebius, about 315, says that Britain was christianised by some of the disciples; Theodoret (about 423) names the Britons among those who were persuaded to receive the law of the crucified by "our fishermen and publicans"; and Nicephorus of Constantinople (758-829) says that one of the Apostles obtained Lybia by lot, another "the remotest regions of the ocean and the British Isles (*lib i. cl.*)."

Our British historian, Gildas (516-570) tells us that "these islands, stiff with cold and frost, and in a distant region of the world, remote from the visible sun, received the beams of light, that is, the holy precepts of Christ, the true Sun, showing to the whole world his splendour, not only from the temporal firmament, but from the height of heaven, which surpasses everything temporal, at the latter part of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, under whom His religion was propagated without impediment, and those who interfered with its professors were threatened with death" (*Hist.* §8). Gildas here refers to the emperor Tiberius Claudius, who came to Britain, and whose clemency towards Caradoc, his captive, and towards the Christians, raised him high in the opinion of the British.

Yet with this certainty that the faith has been brought to this island it is not definitely known who was the first ordained messenger of the glad tidings. Various theories are ventilated, different names are put forth as claimants for the honour by their special advocates, and it still remains for some result to be found from the conflicting evidences.

The possibility of the advent of one of the Apostles has first to be weighed.

**St. Peter.** The only known reference to St. Peter's presence in Britain is by Simeon Metaphrastes, who,

writing about the year 900, says that the Apostle stayed some days in Britain, where, having preached the Word, established churches, ordained bishops, priests and deacons, in the twelfth year of Nero he returned to Rome (*Commentario de SS. Petro et Paulo, ad diem 29 Junii*).

Baronius, however, utterly discredits this author, under which condemnation falls Gulielmus Eysingrenius, the copyist of Metaphrastes. Yet Father Parsons, a Jesuit missionary who died in 1610, wrote:—"I assure the indifferent reader that St. Peter's preaching to the ancient Britons, on the one side is affirmed both by Latins and Greeks, by ancient and modern, by foreign and domestic, by Catholic writers . . . by Protestant antiquaries . . . ; and on the other side denied by no one ancient writer, Greek or Latin, foreign or domestic, Catholic or other." (*Three Conversions of Pagans to the Christian Religion, i. l.*).

**St. Paul.** In his Epistle to the Romans (c. 15, v. 24) St. Paul expressly mentions his intention of preaching the Gospel in Spain, but there is no notice of Britain.

St. Clement, who is said to have been the fellow labourer of St. Paul, was the third Bishop of Rome, A.D. 91-100. He wrote an Epistle to the Corinthians, in which he says that "Paul, having seven times worn chains, and been hunted and stoned, received the prize for such endurance. For he was the herald of the Gospel in the West as well as in the East, and acquired the fame and illustrious faith in teaching the whole world to be righteous. And after he had been to the extremity of the West, he suffered martyrdom under the governors of mankind; and thus delivered from this world he went to the holy place, the most brilliant example of steadfastness

that we possess" (*Apocryphal New Testament, Ep. to Cor. iii. 13-15*). In "the extremity of the West" St. Clement probably refers to Spain and not to Britain, as some commentators surmise.

St. Chrysostom (347-407) says that Paul went from Illyricum to the very ends of the earth (*Hom. in Rom. I. 2, IX. 432*). Theodoret, writing about 423, affirms that St. Paul "liberated from his first captivity in Rome, went into Spain and brought the light of his teaching to other nations, and to the islands which lie in the ocean" (*ad II Tim. iv. 17*). And Sophronius, the Patriarch of Jerusalem, 633-637, intimates that St. Paul preached the Gospel to the Spaniards and the Britons (*Madeburgh Cent. 1. ii. 2*).

The poet Venantius Fortunatus, writing about 580 asserts that the *teaching* of St. Paul penetrated everywhere.

'Transit et oceanum vel quæ facit insula portum  
Quasque Britannus habet terras atque ultima Thule.'

In this may be seen poetical hyperbole rather than historical record, *ultima Thule* being a favourite expression amongst poets to indicate the extreme limits of the then-known world; and certainly the teaching—as St. Paul taught—did penetrate Britain; but in one of the epistles of Fortunatus (*ad Martin Gallic. Episc. Poem v. i. 7*) he mentions Illyricum as the farthest extent of St. Paul's travels.

St. Paul looms large in the Welsh *Triads*, but not as personally visiting these shores.

**St. James the Great.** The forged Chronicle of Flavius Dexter, published in 1620, was in no way connected with the bishop of Barcelona of that name, whose episcopate was about the years 360-390. It is in that seventeenth century chronicle that it is asserted St. James came to Britain.

**St. Simon**, called "Zelotes," or the Zealot, is said by Dorotheus to have come to Britain. This bishop of Tyre at the close of the third century, says that "Simon Zelotes preached Christ through all Mauretania and Afric the Less. At length he was crucified at Brittania, slain and buried" (*Synopsis de Apostol.* 9. *Simon Zelotes*). "But this receiveth no countenance from any ancient writers," says Baronius (*Annal. Eccles. in anno 44*). Theophanes says that Dorotheus wrote much on Ecclesiastical History; but he is pronounced untrustworthy by Tillemont (*V.* 657. note 8).

**St. Philip**. Isidore says that Philip the Apostle went to Gaul, and thence sent missionaries to the barbarous nations bordering on the ocean (*De PP. Utriusque Testamenti*, A.D. 595-636).

Freculphus Lexoviensis copied from Isidore in the ninth century; and William of Malmesbury, quoting documents to the effect that "No other hands than those of the *disciples* of Christ erected the church of Glastonbury," continues, "Nor is it dissonant from probability: for if Philip the Apostle preached to the Gallicans, as Freculphus relates, it may be believed that he also planted the Word on this side of the channel" (*Chronicle of the Kings*, I. ii.).

There is nothing in either of these three authors to warrant the assertion which has unblushingly been made that St. Philip came to Britain; but they do declare the possibility of some of our Lord's disciples bringing the Gospel to this island, and this would harmonise with the Glastonbury tradition of St. Joseph of Arimathæa.

**Aristobulus**. In his Epistle to the Romans (xvi. 10) St. Paul sends messages and greetings to the Christians of that city, and says:—"Salute them which are of the



household of Aristobulus." Now Aristobulus is said to have been one of the seventy disciples of our Lord, the father in law of St. Peter; while from various sources we gather that there was a general tradition that he came to Britain.

The Menologies of the Greek Church say that "Aristobulus was one of the seventy disciples, and a follower of St. Paul the Apostle, with whom he preached the Gospel to the whole world, and ministered to him. He was chosen by St. Paul to be the missionary bishop to the land of Britain, inhabited by a very warlike and fierce race, by whom he was often scourged and repeatedly dragged as a criminal through their towns. Yet he converted many of them to Christianity; and after he had built churches and ordained deacons and priests for the island, he was there martyred." (*Meniæa Graecorum, die decimo quinto Martii*).

Aristobulus is also commemorated as an "Apostle" (of Britain) in the Byzantine Calendar.

The British form of the name of Aristobulus was Arwystli; and the Welsh Triads record that:—There came from Rome with Bran the Blessed, Arwystli Hen (Aristobulus the Aged), Ilid, Cyndav and Mau the son of Cyndav" (*Achau y Prydain—Genealogies of the Saints of Britain*).

Hippolytus mentions Aristobulus as "Bishop of the British"; and Bishop Haleca says:—"The memory of many martyrs is celebrated by the Britons, especially that of St. Aristobulus, one of the seventy disciples" (*Fragmenta in Martyr*).

Bishop Dorotheus of Tyre (of no authority), A.D. 303, says:—"Aristobulus, whom Paul saluted when writing to the Romans, was Bishop of Britain" (*Synopsis de Apostol. No. 23*).

Under the date March 17, St. Ado, Archbishop of Vienne, 800—874, wrote:—"Natal day of Aristobulus, Bishop of Britain, brother of St. Barnabas the Apostle, by whom he was ordained bishop. He was sent to Britain where, after preaching the truth of Christ and forming a Church, he received martyrdom" (*Mart. Ado.*)

From these writers the general consensus of opinion precludes the advent of any of the Apostles to Britain; but they do support the probability that some of the disciples—Aristobulus and St. Joseph of Arimathæa—did come to this island, and this is supported by the native traditions; traditions which must have grown from some foundation of fact, even though they were only orally passed from one generation to another, until the Britons learnt to record them in writing.

**St. Joseph of Arimathæa.** Cardinal Baronius, librarian of the Vatican at the end of the sixteenth century, and a great historian, quotes a Vatican MS. under the year 35 in his Ecclesiastical Annals. This states that in that year Joseph of Arimathæa, Lazarus, Mary, Martha, Marcella their maid, and Maximin were by the Jews put into a boat without sails and without oars, that they drifted along the Mediterranean and landed at Marseilles.

There was already a Greek colony at Marseilles, and it is said that St. Philip the Apostle was converting the Gauls in that district when the exiles landed; although the scene of St. Philip's ministrations is usually supposed to have been in the East.

Freculphus, the bishop of Lisieux, 825—851, following Isidore of Seville (638), affirms that St. Philip preached and laboured in Gaul; and amongst the ancient Welsh *Triads* is one of St. Lazarus, which harmonises with the French traditions concerning him. These *Triads* contain the earliest oral traditions.

William of Malmesbury, in the twelfth century, is the first to write a consecutive record of Glastonbury, which has come to us in his work on the *Antiquity of Glastonbury*, the substance of which, he says, he found in two ancient British authors—Melkinus Avalonisis and Gildas Albanus; but the section on St. Joseph is a later interpolation. He mentions the persecution of the Jews and the martyrdom of St. Stephen, and proceeds:—

“Whilst, therefore, this storm of persecution was raging, the scattered believers penetrated into divers kingdoms of the earth, chosen by the Lord for Himself, to bring the world of Salvation to the nations. Now St. Philip, as Freculphus testifieth in his second book, chapter iv, coming into the country of the Franks to preach, converted many to the faith, and baptised them. Therefore, working to spread Christ’s Word, he chose twelve from among his disciples, and sent them into Britain to bring thither the good news of the Word of Life, and to preach the Incarnation of Jesus Christ, after he had most solemnly spread his right hand over each.

“Their leader, it is said, was Philip’s dearest friend, Joseph of Arimathæa, who buried the Lord.

“Coming therefore into Britain sixty-three years from the Incarnation of the Lord, and fifteen from the Assumption of Blessed Mary, they began faithfully to preach the word of Christ. But the barbaric king and his people, hearing such novel and unaccustomed things, absolutely refused to agree to their preaching, neither did he wish to change the traditions of his ancestors. Yet, because they came from afar, and merely required a modest competency for their livelihood; at their request he granted them a certain island surrounded by woods, thickets and marshes, called by the inhabitants Ynys-virtin, on the confines of his kingdom.

"Thereupon, the said twelve saints residing in this desert were in a very short time warned in a vision of the angel Gabriel to build a church in honour of the Holy Mother of God and Virgin Mary in a place shown to them from heaven; and they, quick to obey the Divine precepts, completed a certain chapel according to what had been shown to them, fashioning its walls of twisted twigs, in the thirty-first year after the Passion of the Lord, and the fifteenth after the Assumption of the Glorious Virgin; a chapel, it is true, of uncouth form, but to God adorned richly with virtue. And as it was the first in that kingdom, God's son distinguished it with greater dignity by dedicating it in honour of His Mother" (*De Antiq. Glaston. Ecclesiae*, ch. i.)

St. Gregory of Tours, in his *History of the Franks*, and Archbishop Haleca of Saragossa, in *Fragmenta*, say that St. Joseph was the first to preach to the Britons.

Maelgwyn of Llandaff, the uncle of St. David, is said to have written (about 450) that "Joseph of Arimathea, the noble decurion, entered into his perpetual sleep with his eleven companions in the Isle of Avalon, and lies in the southern angle of the bifurcated line (the two walls branching from the angle) of the oratory of the Adorable Virgin. Moreover, he has with him two silver-white vessels filled with the blood and sweat of the great prophet Jesus."

The king who gave the missionaries permission to live on Ynys-vitrin (Glastonbury) was Arviragus, king of Dobuni, whose territory embraced the land on the eastern side of the river Severn, Glastonbury being on the south-western confines of his kingdom. This king became tributary to the Emperor Claudius and was allowed to continue his rule. He reigned from about

A.D. 45 to 73, a period which includes the date of St. Joseph's traditional landing, and he was referred to in one of Juvenal's Satires:—

"Some captive king you'll take, or Arviragus will be hurled from his British car" (*Satire iv.* 126).

This king's capital town was Cirencester, and seven miles from it, at Chedworth on the Fosse Road, were found some bricks stamped ARVERI, and a stone inscribed PRASIATA. Now Prasutagus was a brother or cousin to Arviragus, while Tacitus says that Prasutagus was king of the Icenians and the husband of Boudicca (*Annals*, *xiv.* 31). It was in this Roman house at Chedworth that two monograms of Christ were found (p. 23).

These various witnesses—tradition, history and ancient remains—so combine to the same end that it is impossible to think that the whole story is legendary, or simply the result of imagination.

The oratory at Glastonbury was termed "The Old Church" and "The Wooden Church", "The first Church in the kingdom," "The Cradle of Christ's religion in Britain," and "The Secret of the Lord." It was so greatly revered as having been founded by a disciple of Christ, that when the adjacent buildings were re-erected in stone the ancient wattle oratory was carefully preserved by timbering it inside and out and by covering the thatch with lead, until the fire of 1182 consumed it.

Glastonbury was one of the Three Perpetual Choirs of the British Church—Ambresbury, Glastonbury, and Llan Iltud Vawr, or Cor Eurgain (*Triad* 84). This Iltud, or Ilid, was said to have accompanied Bran from Rome, and Eurgain was the British name of Caradoc's daughter.

Of all the traditions of the founding of the Church



in Britain, the story of St. Joseph was held over the whole of England until the Reformation destroyed the old faith, and modern criticism refused to consider that folklore and tradition could have any bearing on history. It was on this claim for St. Joseph that the English bishops demanded precedence over the prelates of France and Spain in the Councils of Pisa (1409), Constance (1417), Sienna (1424), and Basle (1434), and although it was disputed they seem to have gained their point.

**Bran the Blessed.** Another tradition associated with St. Paul is common to Native and Latin Christendom. It is found in the Welsh *Triads*, and receives independent testimony from the Spanish contemporary Martial, who had studied for the law but preferred a dissipated life, and the use of his caustic wit in the composition of *Epigrams*.

Caradoc had long withstood the Roman army, and when, at last, he was overcome in A.D. 51, he was carried in chains to Rome with his brothers, his wife and daughter, and the occasion was thought worthy of a public "triumph"; but the British chieftain made so noble a defence that he and his family were set free by the Emperor Claudius (*Triad* 17., Tacitus, *Annals* xii. 35, 36).

The Romans, thinking that the Silures were subdued by the taking of Caradoc, reduced their forces in South Wales, leaving a few cohorts to build fortified posts in that district. Then the natives, seeing the weakness of their oppressors, poured down upon the camp; the prefect and eight centurions were slain, and, but for speedy succours, the troops had been cut to pieces (Tacitus, *Annals* xii. 38).

Now Bran, the father of Caradoc, was a bard, and it is not known when he was taken captive by the Romans.



He is not mentioned by Tacitus as taken in the year 51 with the others of the family, and it is quite possible that it was at the time of this revolt; whenever it was he was held as a hostage in Rome for seven years. The *Triad* 35 says:—"Bran, the blessed son of Llyr Llediath, who first brought the faith in Christ to the nation of the Cymry from Rome, where he had been seven years as a hostage for his son Caradoc."

When Bran was in Rome St. Paul was probably living there, and it is not impossible that, with some other of Caradoc's family, he came under the influence of the Apostle.

At this same time there was a family of Pudens, converts of wealth, holding senatorial rank in Rome, whose house was situated in, the now named, Via Urbana. Quintus Cornelius Pudens and his wife Priscilla were brought to the faith by St. Paul; they gave him hospitality in their house, and there the faithful assembled for Christian worship. There St. Peter was entertained, and part of the altar on which he celebrated the Divine Mysteries is still preserved.

Quintus and his wife had a son, Cornelius Pudens, who was also baptised, and appears to have been closely connected with some of the early British Christians.

In this connection interest is aroused in the finding of a slab of Purbeck Marble at Chichester, inscribed with the name of one, Pudens, who is said to have there given a plot of land on which a temple to Neptune and Minerva was erected; the foundations of the temple were found at the same time. His name is there associated with that of the Emperor Claudius, which proves the date at which he lived.

NEPTVNO · ET · MINERVAE  
 TEMPLVM  
 PRO · SALVTE · DOMVS · DIVINAE  
 EX · AVCTORITATE · TIB · CLAVD  
 COGIDVBNI · R · LEGAT · AVG IN · BRIT  
 COLLEGIVM · FABROR · ET · QVI · IN · EO  
 A · SACRIS · D · S · D · DONANTE · AREAM  
 PVDENTE · PVDENTINI · FIL.

“The College of Artificers and they who preside over sacred rites or hold office there by the authority of King Cogidunus, legate of Tiberius Claudius Augustus in Britain, dedicated this temple to Neptune and Minerva for the welfare of the Imperial Family, Pudens the son of Pudentinus giving the ground.”

This Cogidunus, a native chieftain, a relation of Caradoc, was appointed by the Romans to be the governor of the southern province of Britain; and Pudens may possibly be identified with one of that name who was a member of the imperial household in Rome about the year 65. If that is the case, Pudens junior was a heathen when in Britain, before he returned with the triumphant Romans, and in Britain may have met Eurgain the daughter of Caradoc and relation of Cogidunus, who was then carried captive to Rome.

Both Pudens and Eurgain came into contact with St. Paul in Rome, and it is possible that both received the faith from him. Eurgain took the name of Claudia, probably at baptism, in recognition of the magnanimity of the Emperor Claudius in pardoning the British prisoners. This was consonant with Roman usage, that one benefitted by pardon, by freedom or other act of mercy, should adopt the name of the benefactor.

The younger Pudens married Claudia, a British maiden, traditionally identified, with apparent consist-

ency, as Eurgain, the daughter of Caradoc. But taking other views—Eurgain has also been said to have been the daughter of Cogidunus and niece of Caradoc, while a Roman tradition makes her his sister. No one can decide, but she was certainly a near relation, which is quite enough for this subject. This is no certain history, but various traditions which seem to harmonise, and as such only should be received. These traditions are likened by Dean Farrar to “a rope of sand,” although he acknowledges that they *may* hold together.

The theory of identity between these people receives support from the pen of the Spaniard Martial, who was in Rome in the year 66, and seems to have had a peculiar admiration for Claudia and Pudens. His first ode to her begins:—

“ My Pudens, with the stranger Claudia wed,  
Demands thy torch, O Hymen, light to shed.  
Then rare cinnamon with spikenard join,  
And mix Thæsean sweets with Massick wine.”

(*Bk. iv. Epigram 13.*)

That Claudia was of the British race is made clear in Book II. Epigram 54:—

“ From painted Britons how was Claudia born?  
The fair barbarian how do arts adorn?  
When Roman charms a Grecian soul commend,  
Athens and Rome may well for her contend.”

According to the Roman martyrologies Pudens and Claudia had six children—Pudentiana, Potentiana, and Praxedes; Linus, Timotheus and Novatus.

It is thought that some members of this family are referred to by St. Paul in his second Epistle to Timothy at Ephesus (iv. 21):—“Eubulus greeteth thee, and Pudens, and Linus, and Claudia, and all the brethren.”

Quintus Pudens was martyred and Priscilla, his wife,

had the catacomb, which is still known by her name, made for the family cemetery.

The Apostolic Constitutions state that Linus was ordained the first bishop of Rome (*l. vii. c. 47*); and if he were, the first successor of St. Peter would be a Briton on his mother's side. St. Timotheus was ordained and went to Britain, and to him Pastor is said to have written an account of the deaths of his relations. His letter is extant, but is of doubtful authenticity. Timotheus is reported to have returned to Rome and there been martyred.

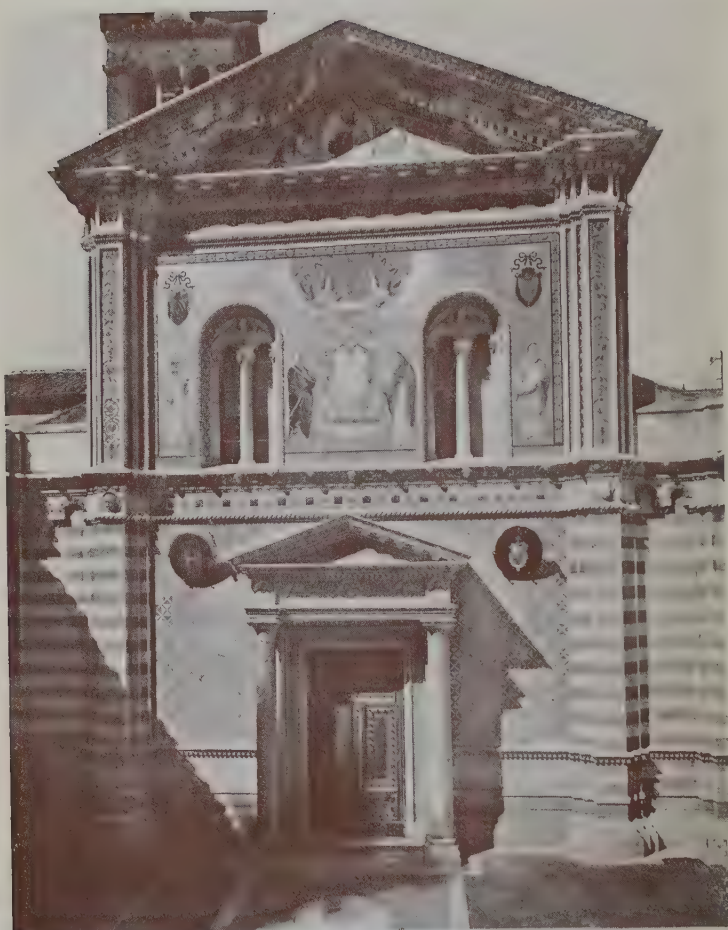
When her brothers and sisters were dead, and buried in the catacomb of St. Priscilla, Praxedes asked Pius I, the bishop of Rome, to erect a *titulus*, or church, within the family mansion, on the site of the baths which her brothers Timotheus and Novatus had built, and in which they had their meetings and services. When Justin Martyr was pressed by the Prefect to make known the place in which the Christians were accustomed to assemble, he answered "in the baths of Timotheus."

The church thus founded in Pudens's house about A.D. 145, was dedicated under the title *Pudentis*; and although it was afterwards rebuilt by Hadrian I (772-795), the foundations of this first century "Cradle of the Western Church" are preserved (Fig. 23).

If the story of Bran be true it was in this family that he was received, here that he met St. Paul, on this spot was he baptised and strengthened in the faith. And after seven years the prince and bard, a Christian, returned to Britain.

In *Triad* 18<sup>th</sup> we read:—"Bran brought the faith in Christ first into this island from Rome, where he had been a prisoner."





CHURCH OF ST. PRUDENZIANA, ROME.



The Welsh genealogy agrees with the Triads:—  
 “Bran the son of Llyr Llediath, was the first of the nation  
 of the Cymry that embraced the faith in Christ.” Another

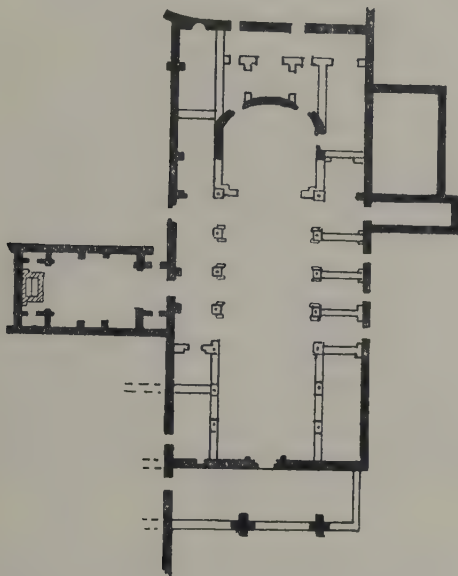


FIG. 23. THE CHURCH IN PUDENZ'S HOUSE, ROME.  
*"The Cradle of the Western Church."*

copy says:—"Bran was the first who brought the Christian faith to this country," while Gildas fixes the date of the introduction of Christianity into Britain before the year 61.

One of the Triads modestly claims priority of Wales above the rest of Britain:—"Three ways in which a Cymro is primarily above every other nation in the Isle of Britain—primary as a native, primary as regards social rights, and primary in respect of Christianity."

The Welsh manuscripts (which must be received with

caution) state that when Bran returned from Rome he was accompanied by three men of Israel—Ilid, Cyndav and Maw, or Mawan; and one man of Italy—Arwystli, who is traditionally identified with Aristobulus (see p. 39), and that these missionaries were sent at the instigation of Claudia.

Two places in the land of the Silures retain traditions of Bran the Blessed: a farmhouse, named Trevran, in Glamorganshire, is said to be on the site of Bran's residence, and not far from it is the church of Ilid, which has a local reputation as the oldest church in Britain; and Castell Dinas Bran, one of his strongholds.

Ilid, one of the men of Israel, founded a church in Glamorganshire which he called Cor-Eurgain at the instigation of Bran and in memory of his granddaughter, where one of the first choirs was established; but after the death of Ilid it was known as Llan Ilid—"The Church of Ilid."

**Lucius.** King Lucius has figured largely in traditional association with the conversion of Britain, and there must have been an original on which so many traditions were founded. In legend his fame grew to such proportions that he was made the King of Britain, in the sense that he ruled over the whole island, and his activities were pictured as great in London as they were in Wales. Then dawned a period of critical reaction in which his very existence was denied.

The folklore of the past is, however, too strong to be ignored by the historian; and although the accretions which envelope a possible original have engendered scepticism, it is probable that there is some fundamental truth in a British chieftain's yearnings for the faith.

A summary of the acts of Lucius will best form a starting point to the traditions concerning him, and that in Dugdale's *History of St. Paul* represents that which was generally accepted until recently.

"In the year 185 Pope Eleutherus sent hither into Britain, at the instance of King Lucius, two eminent doctors, Faganus and Damianus, to the end that they might instruct him and his subjects in the principles of Christian religion, and consecrate such churches as had been dedicated to divers false gods, unto the honour of the true God. Whereupon, these holy men consecrated three metropolitical sees in the three chief cities of the island, unto which they subjected divers bishoprics; the first at London, whereunto all England from the banks of the Humber southwards and Severn eastward belonged; the second, York, which contained all beyond Humber northwards together with Scotland; the third, Caerleon (upon Usk) whereunto all westward of Severn with Wales totally were subject. All which continued so till Augustine (who was sent by Pope Gregory) in the year 604 after the birth of our Saviour, having translated the primacy to Canterbury, constituted Mellitus the first bishop of London."

This extract serves to show the imagined facts as held in the seventeenth century, and how so learned a man as Dugdale failed to grasp the conditions of the British Church.

Our earliest extant author, Gildas, makes no mention of Lucius, and the first notice of him is by Bede, who finished writing his *History* in the year 731. Nennius follows in the ninth century, and these two authors appear to have followed different original writings or traditions.

Bede says:—"In the year of our Lord 156, Marcus

Antoninus Verus, the fourteenth from Augustus, was made emperor (he succeeded in 161) together with his brother Aurelius Commodus. In their time, whilst the holy Eleutherius presided over the Roman Church, Lucius, king of Britain, sent a letter to him, entreating that by his action he might receive Christianity. He soon obtained his pious wish; and the Britons preserved the Faith which they had received, uncorrupt and entire, in peace and tranquillity until the time of the Emperor Diocletian." (*Bk. I. c. iv.*)

Bede derived his information concerning Lucius from the Catalogue of Roman Pontiffs, as enlarged in the time of, and possibly by, Prosper of Aquitaine, and this edition of A.D. 530 is interpolated with later additions. A note is appended to the name of Eleutherius to the effect that "he received a letter from Lucius, a British king, requesting that he might be made a Christian."

The substance of a letter purporting to be the answer of Eleutherius to Lucius is preserved, which is utterly condemned as a forgery from its internal evidence.

The version of Nennius reads:—"After the birth of Christ one hundred and sixty seven years. king Lucius with all the chiefs of the British people received baptism, in consequence of a legation sent by the Roman emperors and the pope Evaristus (Eleutherius)."

"All the chiefs" would include the petty chieftains within the influence of Lucius in South Wales; and the "Roman emperors" (which is palpably wrong) were evidently introduced to satisfy the supposition of the writer that such a work could not be accomplished without the secular authority of Rome; but in the "Book of Llandaff" the "Elders" of Rome are mentioned instead of "emperors," which is in conformity with the organisation of the Church.

The British Triads, the bardic compositions of historic happenings, coloured by poetic language, are not supposed to have been reduced to writing until the eighth century, yet in them may the first insight of this early age be gained.

In these Triads Lucius is said to have been a chieftain of Gwent and Morganwg in South Wales, and two of the Triads say that he founded the Church of Llandaff. His name was Lleurwg, with various spellings, as Lleiwg, Lleur-maur, and Lleufer-mawr, which means "The Great Luminary" or "The Great Light." (*Triads* 63 and 68). And the *Achau y Saint* says that Lucius sent to Rome for teachers, and that Eleutherius sent Dyfan, Ffagan, Medwy and Elfan. The Book of Llandaff mentions but the last two, and recounts that one was a bishop, the other a doctor. The names of these same four people are mentioned in various native forms and in the Latinised spelling.

The version of the twelfth century Book of Llandaff was gathered from the Welsh oral traditions:—"In the year of our Lord 156, Lucius, king of the Britons, sent his ambassadors, namely, Elfran and Medwin, to Eleutherius, the twelfth pope of the Apostolic See, imploring that according to his request he might receive Christianity, which was granted. For, thanking God that a nation which from the time of Brute, the first inhabitant of that region, had been heathen, so ardently wished to embrace the faith, he (the Pope), by the advice of the elders of the Roman city thought fit that the said ambassadors should be baptised(?) and, after instruction in the Christian faith, he ordained Elfan as a bishop, and Medwin as a doctor. And these preachers, eloquent and learned in the Holy Scriptures, returned to Lucius into Britain, through



whose teaching Lucius and the chiefs of all Britain were baptised and, according to the direction of Pope Eleutherius, he established the ecclesiastical hierarchy, caused bishops to be ordained, and taught the rules of a good life."

It is quite possible that these stories enshrine true history, if it can but be disentangled from the myth. The dates given by Bede and others are an obstacle; he even gives contradictory figures in different chapters, while the date of the pontificate of Eleutherius varies in different catalogues. The latest revision by the Vatican authorities gives—Anicetas 155—166, Soter 166—175, Eleutherius 175-189. Yet from one source or another dates may be brought into comparative harmony, and they are not so widely divergent that they cannot to a degree be balanced and resolved to a detail which should not vitiate apparent facts, should the stated facts of a period harmonise. With all the facilities of the twentieth century dates are not always correctly recorded.

Nothing is more likely than that a king—king of a territory in which Caerleon and Neath were situated—who was in constant touch with the 2nd legion of the Roman army, of which one of the standard bearers, Caius Valerius, was of Lyons, should have listened to Christian doctrines from the military converts.

Another consideration is the position of the kingdom of Lucius, which was but a short journey across the Severn from the sanctuary established at Glastonbury, or Avallon; and one of his messengers to Rome was Elvan, or Elfan, who was said to be of Avallon.

Elfan was a Christian, possibly a priest of the succession of St. Joseph and his companions, who were said to have been ordained by St. Philip. Lucius was possibly



baptised by Elfan; but he desired a bishop by whom others could be ordained and the faith spread amongst the people under his rule.

Further research may make it possible to piece together the various traditions.

Elfan and his compatriot Medwy went to Rome and returned with two other missionaries—Fagan and Dyfan, possibly Italians whose names were nationalised, probably Britons who had received the faith in Rome, and were chosen by the pope as most fitting to minister to the Britons in their own tongue; their names certainly savour more of the native than the Italian.

St. Elfan returned from Rome as a bishop, and is said to have become the second bishop of London. Fagan and Dyfan visited the ancient sanctuary at Glastonbury, and there built another church beside those already standing; Medwy presumably remained with Lucius.

In Glamorganshire certain churches bear the names of most of these clerics—Llanfedwy, St. Fagan, and Merthyr Dyfan, indicating that Dyfan was a martyr; and in Monmouthshire there is Llanlleirwg, now known as St. Mellous, near Cardiff, which enshrines the memory of the king.

The church of St. Mary de Lode in Gloucester is the reputed burial place of King Lucius, where a mutilated monument of the fourteenth century is said to be his tomb. But there is a tradition that Lucius resigned his crown for mission work in Switzerland, that he was eventually ordained a bishop, and was buried in the church of Coire, in the Grisons. His relics are shown in the cathedral with those of his sister Emerita; and high in the woods above the town a pulpit of rock is said to bear the marks of his fingers. Here he preached in so loud a voice that he was

heard in Luciensteig (The Pass of Lucius) twelve miles distant.

In a missal of the church of Coire, of the date 1497, a Lucius is commemorated who, in the *sequence*, is said to be "the Son of the happy Mother Britain," and who is locally identified with the British king.

## CHAPTER VI.

### PERSECUTION.

**A**T the opening of the fourth century, Christianity had obtained a decided hold over Britain; it may be said that it was generally widespread, without conveying the impression that the inhabitants of the country were as a whole converted.

What persecution there had been was at the hands of pagan natives, but now the power of an organised persecution by Roman authority was for the first time to reach this island.

The Emperor Diocletian, wishing to ease his rule, associated Maximian with himself in the purple; and in 292 each of them adopted a colleague; Diocletian adopted Galerius, and Maximian appointed Constantius, who received the governorship of Britain and Gaul.

On February 24, A.D. 303, Diocletian issued an edict for persecution, ordering that (1) all churches were to be demolished, (2) all sacred books were to be burnt, (3) all Christian men who held any official position were to be stripped of their dignities and deprived of civil rights; while those who were not officials were to be reduced to the conditions of slaves.

Following this a second edict ordered that all the clergy should be imprisoned without the option of sacrifice.

"Then," writes Lucius Lactantius, a contemporary, in *De Morte Persecutorum*, c.xvii. "from east to west three savage beasts raged, everywhere but in the Gauls." The "savage beasts" were Diocletian, Maximian and Galerius.

Letters were sent to Constantius in Britain urging him to set the edicts in motion; but he was well disposed towards those holding the faith. He now tested the truth and loyalty of the soldiers of his garrison, as described by Eusebius and Sozomen page 14. And although he was unwillingly compelled to allow the demolition of churches and the destruction of books, he tried to preserve the lives of the faithful, or, in the words of Lactantius:—"the temple of God, which is in men, was preserved safe by him" (*De Morte*, xv, xvi). Also, Eusebius says of Constantius that he was "all his life most kindly and favourably disposed towards his subjects, and also most favourably regarded the divine word" (*Eccl. Hist. viii. 13*).

But the edicts of Diocletian were received with joy by some of the local prefects in Britain, who thereupon proceeded to extreme measures without consulting Constantius; and many Christians suffered death.

"The first of these martyrs was St. Alban, who for charity's sake saved another confessor who was pursued by his persecutors, and was on the point of being seized, by hiding him in his house, and then by changing clothes with him; imitating in this the example of Christ, who laid down his life for his sheep, and exposing himself in the other's clothes to be pursued in his stead" (*Gildas, Hist. § 11*).

Speaking of the persecution of the Emperor Diocletian, Bede says:—"At that time suffered St. Alban, of

whom the priest Fortunatus, in the *Praise of Virgins*, makes mention with the blessed martyrs that came to the Lord from all parts of the world, saying:—

“And fruitful Britain noble Alban rears.”

“This Alban, being yet a pagan, at the time when, at the bidding of unbelieving rulers, all manner of cruelty was practised against the Christians, gave entertainment in his house to a certain clerk (Amphibalus), flying from his persecutors. This man he observed to be engaged in continual prayer and watching, day and night; when on a sudden the Divine grace shining on him, he began to imitate the example of faith and piety which was set before him, and being gradually instructed by his wholesome admonitions, he cast off the darkness of idolatry, and became a Christian in all sincerity of heart.

“The aforesaid clerk having been some days entertained by him, it came to the ears of the impious prince (Asclepiodotus, præfectus prætorio under Constantius Chlorus) that a confessor of Christ, to whom a martyr’s place had not been assigned, was concealed in Alban’s house. Whereupon he sent some soldiers to make a strict search after him. When they came to the martyr’s house, St. Alban immediately presented himself to the soldiers instead of his guest and master, in the habit, or long cloak, which he wore, and was led bound before the judge.

“It happened that the judge, at the time when Alban was carried before him, was standing at the altar and offering sacrifice to devils. When he saw Alban, being much enraged that he should thus, of his own accord, put himself in the hands of the soldiers and incur such danger in behalf of his guest, he commanded him to be dragged up to the images of the devils before which he

stood, saying:—‘Because you have chosen to conceal a rebellious and sacrilegious person rather than to deliver him up to the soldiers, that his contempt of the gods might meet with the penalty due to such blasphemy, you shall undergo all the punishment that was due to him, if you abandon the worship of our religion.’ But St. Alban, who had voluntarily declared himself a Christian, to the persecutors of the faith, was not at all daunted at the prince’s threats, but, putting on the armour of spiritual warfare, publicly declared that he would not obey the command. Then said the judge:—‘Of what family or race are you?’ ‘What does it concern you of what stock I am?’ answered Alban. ‘If you desire to hear the truth of my religion, be it known to you that I am now a Christian and bound by Christian duties.’ ‘I ask your name, tell me it immediately,’ said the judge. ‘I am called Alban by my parents,’ replied he, ‘and I worship and adore the true and living God, who created all things.’

“Then the judge, inflamed with anger, said, ‘If you will enjoy the happiness of eternal life, do not delay to offer sacrifice to the great gods.’ Alban rejoined, ‘These sacrifices, which by you are to devils, neither can avail the subjects nor answer the wishes or desires of those that offer up their supplications to them. On the contrary, whosoever shall offer sacrifice to these images, shall receive the everlasting pains of hell for his reward.’

“The judge, hearing these words, and being much incensed, ordered this holy confessor of God to be scourged by the executioners, believing that he might by stripes shake that constancy of heart, on which he could not prevail by words. Alban, being most cruelly tortured,



bore the same patiently, or rather joyfully, for our Lord's sake. When the judge perceived that he was not to be overcome by tortures, or withdrawn from the exercise of the Christian religion, he ordered him to be put to death.

"Being led to execution, he came to a river (the Ver), which ran with great rapidity between the wall of the town and the arena where he was to be executed. He there saw a multitude of people of both sexes, and of various ages and conditions, who were assembled, doubtlessly by Divine instinct, to attend the blessed confessor and martyr, and had so taken up the bridge over the river, that he could scarce pass over that evening. In fact, almost all had gone out, so the judge remained in the city without attendance.

"St. Alban, urged by an ardent and devout wish to attain the sooner to martyrdom, drew near to the stream, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, whereupon the channel was immediately dried up, and he saw that the water had given place and made a way for him to pass. Among the rest, the executioner appointed to put him to death saw this, and moved by Divine inspiration, hastened to meet him at the place of execution, and casting away the sword which he had carried ready drawn, fell at his feet, praying that he might rather be accounted worthy to suffer with the martyr whom he was ordered to execute, or, if possible, instead of him.

"Whilst from a persecutor he thus was become a companion in the faith, and the other executioners hesitated to take up the sword which was lying on the ground, the holy confessor, accompanied by the multitude, ascended a hill, about five hundred paces from the place, beautiful, or rather clothed with all kinds of

flowers, gradually sloping into a most beautiful plain, with no steep or rough places: worthy from its lovely appearance to be the scene of a martyr's death.

"On the top of this hill St. Alban prayed that God would give him water, and a living spring immediately broke out before his feet, the channel being confined, so that all men understood that the river also had been dried up at the prayer of the martyr; for it was not likely that the martyr before whom the river was dried, should desire it at the top of the hill without some special object. The river having done its holy service returned to its natural course, leaving an impression on the minds of the people.

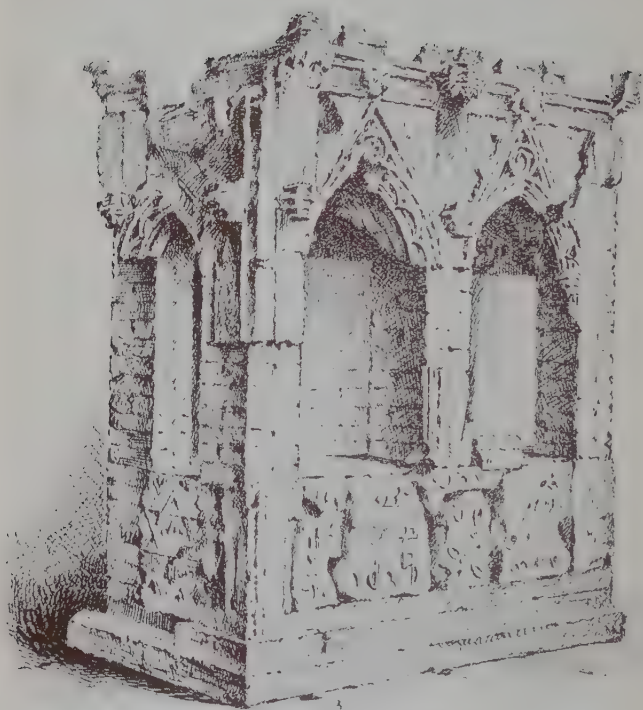
"Here, therefore, the head of the undaunted martyr was struck off, and here he received the crown of life, which God has promised to them that love Him. But he who gave the evil stroke was not permitted to rejoice in his deed, for his eyes dropped upon the ground at the same moment as the blessed martyr's head.

"At the same time was also beheaded the soldier who before, through the Divine admonition, refused to give the stroke to the holy confessor. Of him it is apparent that, though he was not regenerate by baptism, yet he was cleansed by the washing of his own blood, and rendered worthy to enter the kingdom of heaven.

"Then the judge, astonished at the novelty of so many heavenly miracles, ordered the persecution to cease immediately, and began to honour the death of the saints, by which he once thought that they might be turned from the Christian faith.

"The blessed Alban suffered death on the twenty-second day of June, near the city of Verulam (St. Albans, Hertfordshire), which is now by the English nation called Verlamacestir, or Varlingacestir.





SHRINE OF ST. AMPHIBALUS.

“At the same time suffered Aaron and Julius, citizens of the City of Legious (Caerleon-on-Usk), and many more of both sexes in several places; who, when they had endured sundry torments, and their limbs had been torn after an unheard-of manner, yielded up their souls to enjoy in the heavenly city a reward for the sufferings which they had passed through” (Bede, *Eccl. Hist.* I. vii).

The name of the priest, who was hidden by St. Alban, and his escape made possible by disguise, is unknown; but the means by which this was done, the assuming by St. Alban of the cleric's cloak, appealed to the popular mind, and as the Greek name by which this sort of cloak was known was “Amphibalus,” that name was given to the escaped Christian teacher. Amphibalus was subsequently captured in Wales. The intention of his captors seems to have been that he also should suffer at Verulam; but he was put to death about four miles short of the city, where the village of Redbourn now stands, the church of which is dedicated to his memory.

The fame of these four martyrs, Sts. Alban, Amphibalus, Julius and Aaron, must have spread widely over Britain, although all traces of them have disappeared over the earlier Saxon England. Gildas, writing about 564; Bede, in 731; and Matthew of Westminster, under date 313, concur in saying that a church was founded in honour of St. Alban on the site of his martyrdom within a very few years of his death.

Giraldus Cambrensis, writing about 1300, asserts that churches were erected in honour of St. Alban and other martyrs in the time of the Britons, before the Saxon invasion.

In the Goldcliffe charter the names of Alban, Aaron

and Julius are associated with Caerleon; and in the Book of Llandaff the last two saints are noticed in relation to the City of Legious (Caerleon).

Geoffrey says that Caerleon "was famous for two churches, whereof one was built in honour of the martyr Julius, and adorned with a choir of virgins, who had devoted themselves wholly to the service of God; but the other, which was founded in memory of St. Aaron his companion, and maintained a convent of canons, was the third metropolitan church of Britain" (*Bk. IX. c. 12*).

Modred rose against and fought his uncle, the renowned King Arthur, who was repulsed, and his queen Guinevere fled to Caerleon "where she resolved to lead a chaste life among the nuns in the church of Julius the martyr" (*Bk. XI. c. 1*).

It is in the same series of Arthurian battles that a church of St. Amphibalus in Winchester is noticed, by both Geoffrey and Roger of Wendover. When the British Constantine, King of Cornwall, pursued the two sons of Modred, "one of them who fled for sanctuary to the church of St. Amphibalus in Winchester, he murdered before the altar. The other had hidden himself in a convent of monks in London, but was at last found out, brought before the altar, and there put to death" (*Bk. XI. c. 4*).

Perhaps there may be more truth than is usually accepted in the words of the romancing Geoffrey of Monmouth when he says that during the persecution of Diocletian in Britain, Maximianus Herculus was the Roman general "by whose command all the churches were pulled down and all the copies of the Holy Scriptures that could be found were burnt in the public markets.



The priests also, with the believers under their care, were put to death" (*Bk. V. Ch. 5.*).

When Diocletian abdicated in 305 it would seem that the persecution ceased in Britain and Gaul, although it continued elsewhere until the Edict of Milan, in 313, put an end to it.

When persecution ended, there was a marvellous revival of religious fervour; Gildas says that "in less than ten years of the above named persecution, and when the bloody decrees began to fail in consequence of the death of its authors, all Christ's young disciples, after so long and wintry a night, began to see the genial light of heaven. They rebuilt the churches which had been levelled with the ground, they founded, erected, and finished churches to the holy martyrs, and everywhere showed their ensigns as tokens of their victory. Festivals were celebrated and sacraments received with clean hearts and lips, and all the sons of the Church rejoiced, as it were, in the fostering bosom of a mother" (*Hist.* §12).

Bede copied this paragraph from Gildas (*Eccl. Hist. I. viii*).

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE BISHOPS OF BRITAIN.

VARIOUS notices of bishops in Britain are met with at a very early period—Aristobulus in Apostolic times, Elfán in the second century, etc.—and it would appear that Britain was systematically divided into three principal areas for ministerial jurisdiction before the year 314; those areas co-ordinating with the Roman civil provinces.

These divisions were not clearly defined as sees and archsees as now, but they show a remarkable organisation for that period. They are the only known territorial bishops at that time, all other prelates are mentioned by their personal names.

The bishops in Britain were numerous enough to send three representatives to the Council of Arles, convened by Constantine in 314; within eighteen months of the *Edict of Milan*, which made it possible for Christians to worship openly. It is difficult to conceive how greatly the Church had spread before the Edict was issued, as such progress seems to be improbable in so few months.

To this assembly at Arles, which was said by St. Augustine to be “a plenary council of the whole world,” went three British bishops—Eborius of York (an early example of a prelate signing in the name of his see), Restitutus of London, and Adelfius of Caerleon; with

Sacerdos, a priest, and Arminius, a deacon (Mansi, *ii.* 476, 477).

Certain of the canons promulgated at this council, to which the British subscribed, require special attention, as the very questions here decided by the Catholic Church were the cause of division between the Canterbury and British Churches at a later date. Canon 1 decided the day on which Easter was to be celebrated; Canon 8 was on baptism; and Canon 20 required eight episcopal consecrators at the ordination of a bishop, "or if this be impossible, three at the very least."

At the First Council of Nicæa, assembled by Constantine the Great in 325, at Bithynia, there is little doubt that British bishops were present although there is no direct proof. Eusebius says that the emperor "invited the speedy attendance of bishops from all quarters, in letters expressive of the honourable estimation in which he held them" (*Life of Constantine iii.* 6). Constantine would certainly not omit Britain, with which country he was so closely associated.

All the principal documents relating to this council are given in Mansi's *Concilia*, but no original list of signatures is extant, and the copies are untrustworthy.

In Constantine's *Letter to the Churches* after the council, he says:—"I myself have undertaken that this decision (the fate of Easter) should meet with the approval of your Sagacities, in the hope that your Wisdoms will gladly admit that practice which is observed at once in the city of Rome and in Africa, throughout Italy and in Egypt, in Spain, the Gauls, Britain, Libya and in Cilicia, with entire unity of judgment" (*Ibid iii.* 19). Here the presence of the British is intimated and their orthodoxy asserted; and the two points are emphasized in

a letter of St. Athanasius to the Emperor Jovian written in 363, in which he testified that the British bishops "accepted and assented to the faith as defined at Nicæa" (*Ad Jovian Imp.*).

On the petition of St. Athanasius a council was convened at Sardica (Sophia, in Bulgaria) in 344 or 347, at which thirty-three bishops of Gaul and Britain signified their adhesion to the decisions of the Synod (Athanasius, *Apol. cont. Arian*).

To prepare the bishops for the Council of Rimini, the learned Hilary of Poitiers addressed a treatise to the prelates of Gaul and Britain in 358. It is known as *De Synodis*, short for the fuller title "On the Synods of the Catholic Church and against the Arians," in which he exhorts them to come to the council in a conciliatory frame of mind. And he congratulated them on their orthodoxy.

By order of the Emperor Constantius the council was summoned to meet at Ariminum (Rimini) in North-east Italy, in 359; the emperor promising to supply them with the expenses of travel and subsistence, as his predecessor had done. As the bishops did not wish to jeopardise their independence this offer was refused, except by three of the British bishops; and although they accepted the royal bounty they declined the offer of a collection among the assembled prelates, "thinking it better to be burdensome to the general revenue than to individuals" (Sulpic. Severus, *Hist. Sac.* ii. 41, 55).

In addition to the three territorial bishops the Keltic Church had an almost unlimited *Chorepiscopi*. These are explained in the Arabic version of the Nicene Canons as local bishops set over towns and monasteries. In the Keltic Church they were nearly all at-

tached to monasteries, and they retained their independence long after those on the continent were organised (in the third century) for episcopal supervision in the country far distant from the seat of the diocesan. Thus St. Patrick made the fifteen sons of his sister Darerea bishops, to go farther afield than he possibly could travel. Their office was episcopal without jurisdiction.

The British Church was essentially monastic, and an abbot, cleric or lay, or an abbess, retained some of these bishops for confirmations, ordinations, dedications and benedictions.

The duties of a bishop are described in the *Leabhar Brecc*:—"A bishop for every chief tribe for the ordaining of clerics, for consecrating of churches, for spiritual direction to princes and superiors (Abbots) and the ordained, for hallowing and blessing children after their baptism (confirmation), for regulating work of every church, and for encouraging boys and girls to cultivate reading and piety."

A hundred and eighteen bishops are said to have assembled in council at Llanddewi Brefi under St. David and after the British were driven by the Saxons to the fastness of Wales, many others were inhabiting that part of Britain. The Church in Wales was then reorganised and a diocesan episcopate was established; these were at Bangor, St. Asaph, St. Davids, Llanbadarn, Llandaff and Margam.

Luidhard, who accompanied Queen Bertha to Kent and ministered in St. Martin's church, near Canterbury, was a chorepiscopus; and the "sevenscore croziers" which met to pass the laws of Howel Dha would include diocesans, chorepiscopi, and abbots, who also carried croziers.

These "wandering bishops" increased to such an extent that the "hundreds of bishops" who at one time were said to be in Ireland, should not be regarded as an exaggeration. So numerous did they become, and so independently did they act, that they got beyond the control of the diocesan, and they had to be restrained at the Council of Verneuil in Gaul, in 755, and at other councils.



## CHAPTER VIII.

### PILGRIMAGES.

NOT only had Britons witnessed for the faith by their blood, but in other respects they identified themselves with the ideals of the Catholic Church.

This is very noteworthy in the making of pilgrimages to Palestine, to offer prayer at, and to venerate, those places made sacred by the Saviour's Passion, as soon as the liberty gained by Constantine's decrees and the uncovering of the Holy Sepulchre by St. Helena permitted.

The difficulties of such long journeys in those days cannot now be imagined; but the fervour that carried the bishops afar to attend the councils of the Church, infused a spirit which surmounted all obstacles to the devotion of the people.

About the year 393 St. Jerome was writing letters to various people on many subjects, in which several passages occur implying that the Britons were in the habit of making pilgrimages to the Holy Places in Palestine (*in Ep. xlix. ad Paulin; Ep. lxxxiv ad Oceanum*). He also says "I dare not confine the omnipotence of God to one narrow corner of the world. . . . From Jerusalem and from Britain the court of heaven is equally open" (*Ep. lviii. ad Paulin*).

Melania the elder, who died in 410, gave hospitality to those who went to Jerusalem "for their vows' sake,

bishops, monks, virgins, and those joined in marriage . . . inhabitants of Persia and Britain, and all the isles" (Palladius, *Hist. Lausiaca*, c. 118).

Theodoret, writing in 423, says that many went to the Holy Land from the extreme West, Spaniards and Britons, and the Galatæ who dwell between them" (*Philoth.*, *xxvi*); and Gregory of Tours (573-594) mentions a Briton who, in his time, came to Tours on his way to Jerusalem (*Hist. Franc. l.v. c. 22*).

With Rome there was, naturally, greater intercourse, and it is needless to trace all those who turned their footsteps to the capital of the world; to which Caradoc was carried captive, and whence he returned in all honour; where Bran had been held as hostage for seven years and received the ministrations of St. Paul; where the British maiden had wedded with the senator Pudens; where the two great Apostles had preached and been slain, and the relics of innumerable martyrs reposed. St. David of Wales, St. Indract and his companions may be mentioned as some of the earlier pilgrims to the Eternal City, which must have had a great attraction for Britons from their associations therewith.

The way those early Christians travelled about dawns but slowly on the mind. How they went and came between Ireland and Britain, to Scotland and to Brittany, one saint visiting another for mutual spiritual benefit, or to carry the faith to those who had not received the Word. In studying the lives of the British and Irish saints the fabulous requires winnowing from facts, yet it is not impossible if discernment is not warped by prejudice; and the intercommunion, relationship, and harmonious combination of effort to forward the work of Christ is astonishing. Exact dates may not be available,

marvellous legends may have been superadded, yet nothing surpasses the tremendous facts which are gradually presented as the subject is pursued.

Just as a quite ordinary example of what was constantly going on, look at St. Cybi, who crossed from Ireland in a wicker coracle with twelve disciples. Strong currents whirled their fragile boat helplessly amongst and against the rocks of the Carnarvonshire coast, and in the little island of Cyngar we see the record of the drowning of St. Cybi's uncle, whose name was Cyngar. Another example is seen in the case of Cormac, one of Columba's priests at Iona; he was a fearless navigator who had thrice skimmed the turbulent seas to the northern islands of the Hebrides and the Orkneys. On one occasion he was carried beyond the limit of human experience and the crew rowed into the midst of "loathsome and dangerous creatures"; with a terrible rush they smote the keel and the sides, the prow and the stern so violently that it seemed as though they would break through the skin covering of the coracle; they swarmed over the blades of the oars, and are described as the size of frogs with very terrible stings. Possibly they were jelly fish, which abound in those seas.

There is no end of such stories, told in a matter-of-fact way with no idea of heroism; but what those trials must have been can only be realised by those with no knowledge of navigation who have been buffeted by storms in a fragile craft. And it was all done for the love of souls.

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE SPREAD OF THE BRITISH CHURCH.

**F**ROM the preceding pages it may be gathered that the faith had generally permeated Britain; the limited insight gained from the paucity of materials, the destruction during persecution, and the reconstruction after it ceased, speak volumes. Such scant references infer much more than they relate; the pilgrimages and the attendance at Synods and Councils open a wide vista of an organised Church and the reception of the faith by the people; which will be yet further confirmed when the version of the Scriptures and the destruction by the Anglo-Saxons is considered.

The fervour which had accomplished so much under adverse circumstances now burned to carry the news of Redemption to others around Britain who had not heard of the true God.

The time has now come to trace the progress of the British Church to Ireland; and from Britain, yet more especially from Ireland, to Scotland.

For this purpose a few outstanding personalities are taken; which in no way is intended to belittle the numerous host of their fellow workers whose zeal can be followed only in a complete history of each branch of the Church.

**St. Ninian.** While the Roman troops occupied Britain, and about fifty years after the Diocletian perse-

cution, there was a Christian family living in the Valley of the Solway. The British father was a Roman official in Strathclyde, who had his son Ninian, or Ringan, baptised at an early age and sent him to be educated in Rome during the pontificate of Pope Damasus (366—384), where he was consecrated in 394 and sent as a bishop to the neighbourhood of his home in north-west Britain.

On his way home Ninian stayed with St. Martin at Tours, and saw the development of monasticism under that prelate. He returned to Britain and founded his monastery at Whithorn, or Whitherne, on the promontory in Wigtonshire between Luce Bay and Wigton Bay.

Ninian had seen the noble buildings of dressed stone in Rome and Tours, and the Roman buildings in Britain; and he is said to have brought skilled craftsmen from Gaul; this probably refers to architects or master masons, as the British people were already famed for their building construction under Roman tuition and had been employed by Constantine in the rebuilding of Autun. At all events, this was the first known British monastery to be erected of dressed stone, and its white appearance gained for it the name of *Candida Casa*, "The White House."

While building this monastery in 397, news of the death of St. Martin reached Ninian, and he dedicated his Church to the memory of that saint. Except for Glastonbury this was the first dedication of a church in honour of a saint after the Latin custom, as hitherto, in Britain, a church was known by the name of its founder.

St. Ninian's work lay among the southern Picts, north of the Roman Wall and south of the Grampian mountains. One of his cells in this territory was on the banks of the Molendinar, where he founded a *Glas*, or







monastery, which in later years was raised by St. Kentigern into his episcopal seat, and is now known as Glasgow. Another of his monasteries was on the peninsula on the eastern side of Luce Bay, at Kirkmadrine, and his name is found in the place names of various spots through southern Pictland.

The White monastery—also known as the Great Monastery—was famed through Strathclyde and Ireland; it was a great centre of learning to which British and Irish resorted, until it was destroyed by the Picts and a party of sea-faring Saxon raiders.

St. Ninian died about 429 or 432 and was buried in the White House. The cave on the shore to which he retired for solitude is still distinguishable from other caves by the Christian symbols marked on its walls by pilgrims; his bell—the clog-rinny, or Bell of Ringan, is preserved at Edinburgh; and three upright stones marked with the sacred monogram, one at Whithorn and two at Kirkmadrine, are of the time of St. Ninian, and were possibly erected by him (see Figs. 9, 10, & 11).

**St. Patrick.** The Irish Church may be counted as one with the British; it was received from Britain, and although it may have developed certain minor differences it was to all intents the same in doctrine and custom. The Irish were known as Scots long before their intercourse with Caledonia caused their name to supersede that of ancient Pictland in the 11th or 12th century.

Thus the ancient Church of Caledonia, or Scotland, of Lindisfarne and Northumbria generally, is sometimes termed the Scotie Church, as originating from the Irish Columba's mission, but included in this progress is the work of St. Ninian and St. Kentigern emanating from

Whithorn and Glasgow in Strathclyde; it is also embraced in the terms "British" and "Keltic," as distinguishing it from the Augustinian and later Latin missions.

Although the Romans never carried their arms to Ireland they had a certain knowledge of it; they could see it from the north British coast, and there was considerable passing to and fro between the two islands, from which current events were not unknown to the eastern Irish. Indeed, an Irish tradition places one of their countrymen, named Altus, in the Roman army, who was present at the Crucifixion, and was so impressed that he was baptised, and returned to preach the faith to his kinsmen.

An Irish chieftain was defeated in a local battle and fled to Britain, offering to betray his countrymen to Agricola (Tacitus, *Agricola* c. xxiv); and private curiosity or adventure drew some of the Romans in north-west Britain to the opposite coast, where their sepulchres were discovered at Bray Head early in the nineteenth century, while innumerable coins, from Nero to Honorius, have been found along the east coast.

In A.D. 222, and for three years, King Cormac Mac Art raided the British coasts, but in addition to his spoils he carried back many of the arts and appliances of the Romans, some of their literature, and—the *Annals* tell us—a knowledge of the Christian faith, which he seems to have embraced, for he gained the bitter hostility of the Druids.

Neither may we doubt that raids from Ireland were made on the coasts of Wales and Cornwall; and if not captives, then commerce between the two countries probably diffused the Christian faith in the south-east of Ireland.

From the Roman historian Ammianus Marcellinus

and the Irish *Annals of the Four Masters* we learn that in the fourth century the Irish, sometimes alone and sometimes allied with the Picts, were a constant scourge to the British, and many captives were carried to Ireland, among whom, doubtless, were some Christians. These raids, destructive to life, property and freedom, grew to such proportions that Theodosius, who landed in Kent in 369, organised a system of defence against the raiders; he captured many of them and enrolled the Irish prisoners into cohorts, which he stationed in Gaul.

We are familiar with the defences made by the Romans on the south-eastern coasts of Britain against the Saxons; but they also found it necessary to appoint a *Comes Britanniarum* on the north-west coast to guard against the Irish freebooters.

Before the defences were complete a great raid was made into Britain, when a boy named Succath, or Patrick, his sister and some thousands of the British were seized and carried captive to Antrim, where Patrick became a slave to Milchu, son of the king of North Dalriada, who lived in the valley of the Braid; and his sister was sold to a man in Connaught.

This Patrick was probably born at Dumbarton—the ancient Alcluith—on the west coast of Scotland; he was the son of a deacon and grandson of a priest, and was carried captive when sixteen years of age, about the year 388.

How these Christians heard of the faith in that northern part is unknown, it was before St. Ninian's teaching; but it shows how much farther the Gospel had spread than is usually supposed. With a priest, a deacon and a Christian household, it was an organised branch of the Church, just beyond the province of Strathclyde, in



PLACE-NAMES IN IRELAND MENTIONED IN THIS BOOK.

the country of the Piets, in the middle of the fourth century. Was this the district spoken of by Tertullian in 208 as "inaccessible to the Romans but subdued to Christ"?

The difficulties in treating of St. Patrick are great, so many differences exist amongst various authors; legend has distorted the truth, and much antagonism has arisen on whether Palladius and Patrick were one individual, or whether they were two separate missionaries. While this is a point which all wish could be made clear, it does not actually affect the subject of these pages. If they were two personalities their missions were of so near a date that it does not nullify the present aim of tracing the spread of the British Church.

It has been shown that Christianity was known in Ireland in the early part of the third and greatly increased in the fourth century. But there is no evidence as to how it first reached Ireland. It was probably introduced through the importation of slaves.

The irrepressible Irish heretic, Coelestine, drew the Pope's attention to Ireland, and at the same time St. Germain sent his archdeacon Palladius to Pope Celestine, according to Prosper, in 429—the same year that St. Germain came to Britain to combat the heresy of Pelagius—in 431 "Palladius was consecrated by Pope Coelestius and sent to the Scots believing in Christ, as their first bishop" (Prosper of Aquitaine, *Chron. in Migne, Pat. Lat. li*). This shows a knowledge that Christians were in Ireland, but without a teacher.

Palladius landed in Wicklow, but the opposition of the pagans was too strong for him, and he was shortly expelled. His vessel was driven northwards on to the British coast, and he is said to have been martyred at



Fordun, Kincardine, where an ancient church bears the name of St. Palladius, or Paldy; but this is on the east coast. Such a journey looks as though Palladius was making his way to Gaul across Scotland.

When twenty-three years of age Patrick escaped from slavery; but his thoughts were with those he had left; he saw visions in which his late companions called on him to "come over and help us." He had learnt the language and customs of his captors, and his soul was stirred to obey the call. His relations begged that he would remain with them, but as he says in his *Confession*, "Woe unto me if I preach not the Gospel."

Confusion reigns over this period of St. Patrick's life, and nothing can be recorded with certainty. It would seem that Patrick went to Gaul and was ordained by St. Germain; no writing of his own mentions any journey to Rome. A tradition carries him to the Egyptian-modelled monastery of Lerins; but it is all too vague; whether he was ordained by the Pope or St. Germain, his orders were from a Latin source.

About the year 432 St. Patrick and his companions, amongst whom were artificers in wood and metals, went to Ireland, landing where Wicklow now stands. One of the signs of a previous presence of a priest was when Aibill requested of Patrick the vessels for the Mass, and Patrick pointed out to him a cave in which was an altar with a chalice of glass standing on each corner (*St. Evin, Vita S. Patricii*).

They then sailed northwards touching at various places for preaching and baptising, in many of which towns his name is retained to the present day.

At Strangford Lough the missionaries were received by the chieftain, named Dichu, who confessed the faith, and

gave Patrick a barn for a Church, which was afterwards known as *Sabhall Padhrig*, "Patrick's Barn," around which grew his monastery of Sabhall, or Saul, to which he afterwards returned to end his days.

Thence Patrick went to the place of his former captivity in Dalriada, in the Wood of Fochlut, and founded a great church, a "Domnach-Mor"; the place is now known as Donaghmore, Co. Tyrone.

The five great roads radiating from Tara facilitated the penetration of the country, and by them St. Patrick went, baptising and founding monasteries of the same character as those in Wales. He founded the church of Armagh—which was to become the primatial see in 445—a hundred and fifty years before the foundations of the see of Canterbury.

From the monasteries St. Patrick sent bishops and priests through the country, and the faith spread with astonishing rapidity.

As in Britain, a pre-Vulgate version of the Scriptures was used by St. Patrick, as quoted in his *Confession* and in the saint's *Epistle to Coroticus*.

From the Irish Catalogue of Saints of the date 750 we learn that St. David, St. Cadoc and Gildas, about the year 550, introduced a British Liturgy which was different from that used by St. Patrick (*Tirechan Catalogus Sanctorum Hiberniae*). One feature of the older Liturgy is made clear by the Synod of Macon, in Gaul, held in 623, when it was said that the Irish Church celebrated the Holy Eucharist with great variation and multiplication of collects and prayers.

**St. Kentigern.** The disciples of St. Ninian's mission spread far from the headquarters at Whithorn, they penetrated as far as Perthshire and made converts.

One of the baptised, Kentigern, a native of Culross, was ordained, but the recrudescence of heathendom made him yearn for a wider field than his immediate neighbourhood in which to teach the faith. Many of the baptised Picts had apostatized, and paganism was aggressively rampant.

Kentigern visited a hermit named Fergus, at Carnock, for advice, but while there Fergus died, and Kentigern turned his steps towards the monastery of St. Ninian in the south-west, bearing the body of the hermit for burial in hallowed ground. He came to Molendinor, where Glasgow now stands, only to find that the monastery was destroyed, the monks dispersed or massacred, and the place become a waste. Here Kentigern buried Fergus in the forsaken cemetery "which, long before, had been blessed by St. Ninian" (*Jocelyn of Furness*); and here Kentigern erected a little oratory and a wooden cell, and began his reclamation of the perverted.

News of his single-handed efforts must have reached Ireland, as an Irish bishop travelled to the Clyde and consecrated Kentigern to the episcopate in the year 540, when he was in his twenty-fifth year. Kentigern laboured strenuously, but the opposition of the heathen was more bitter than that which met St. Ninian in his first evangelisation of the Picts; he could make no progress, so he left them and went into Wales, founding churches on his way through Cumbria.

In Wales St. Kentigern founded a monastery and a school at Llanelwy, "the Church on the Elwy," afterwards known as St. Asaph's, where he built a church "of planed wood, after the manner of the Britons" (*Jocelyn, Vita S. Kentigerni*, 24), and assembled nine hundred and sixty-five monks.

The heathens of Strathclyde were defeated by Rhydderch Hoelat Arthuret, near Carlisle, in the year 573, and Kentigern, with many of the Llanelwy monks, returned to Glasgow. Here Kentigern was visited by St. Columba, and together they worked to bring the northern and southern Picts to a knowledge of the faith. The Briton and the Irishman, both of the British Church, united the two branches, which had never been divided except by the waters between the two islands, in the message of the Cross.

St. Kentigern died in 603, but his name is remembered through North Britain in a chain of churches reaching to Northumbria—Lanark, Borthwick, Peebles, Penicuik, Currie, Abermilk, Kirkmahoe, Hassendean, and Polwarth amongst others. His saintly character is seen in the nick-name of Mungo, "the beloved," by which he is more generally known.

**St. Columba.** After the Irish from Dalriada, in the north of Ireland, had emigrated to the south-west of Scotland, they called the district of their settlement by the same name; there was continual communication between the people of the two Dalriadas, and priests passed over the Irish Sea on their sacred mission, among whom was St. Comgal, who went from the Irish Bangor in 559.

Although there were certain priestly pioneers, the next great expansion of the Keltic Church was through the ministry of St. Columba, who was born at Gartan, in Donegal, in 521. He was principally educated in the school of Clonard, the famed foundation of St. Finnian, and went to Bishop Ethen at Clonfad for ordination, which bishop he found ploughing a field.

Many cases of Keltic clerics tilling the ground for

their subsistence are recorded; it was probably a common custom, as it is still the custom in Russia and Syria.

Columba travelled widely in his work of evangelization in Ireland, where he is said to have founded three hundred churches and monasteries, of which Durrow was the largest and most important. He was also a notable scribe and lover of books, which, indeed was destined to lead to unforeseen travels and consequent spread of the faith.

The making of books was far advanced by this time, and it was an infringement of copyright by Columba that led to a tribal battle in 561, and a great loss of life, for which Columba was sent from Ireland to win souls in Pictland to the same number as had been slain through him.

In the year 563 Columba, with twelve companions, crossed to the Irish settlement of Dalriada in Scotland, but wishing to get out of sight of his loved native land lest the temptation to return should divert his mind from his work, he went to the island of Hy, or Iona, off the west coast of Mull.

This was the beginning of greatly extended missionary activity in the Irish Church, activity which has never been surpassed by the Christians of any country.

After two years, engaged in building his monastery on Iona, converting the people of the adjacent islands, and learning the Pictish tongue, Columba started on his great evangelising tour to the Northern Picts, situated to the north of the Grampian range of mountains.

To equip his mission for a successful issue Columba sent to Ireland for two of the Pictish people who had been his fellow students at Clonard—St. Canice and St. Comgall—who were great organisers and knew the lan-







guage. With these and other companions he set forth right across the country to the eastern coast to seek Brude, the powerful but heathen king, in his stronghold where Inverness now stands.

They took the easiest way along a series of Lochs, now united by the Caledonian Canal. Lochs Linnhe, Eil, Lochy, Oich, and Ness provided a water-way for the greater part of the journey, and the imagination can picture the band of travellers suspending their light coracles on their backs when they arrived at the end of one Loch and had to make their way by land until they again reached water; and so they went right across the country almost to the Moray Firth.

It is not our purpose to dwell upon the difficulties they experienced on meeting King Brude, or the opposition of his magicians; but eventually the king received the faith and laboured whole-heartedly to help the missionaries. Columba preached over this country until 574; and he is said to have gone so far as Buchan, and to have founded the monastery of Deer, in Aberdeenshire; numerous churches were built—some of which still preserve his name—and he settled his priests in various centres.

From Iona priests rode the waves in their frail coracles and carried the Gospel to the Orkneys, the Hebrides and to Iceland, to all the islands bearing any population; while those who wished for a life of contemplative solitude as a hermit or an anchorite sought precipitous rocks on which to live. Indeed, there is scarcely a rocky islet in those stormy seas which bears no remains of Keltic cell or oratory.

St. Columba died in 597, the year St. Augustine landed in Kent, after he had carried the Scotie Church

over the land of the Picts, in harmony with St. Kentigern; and left it for others to bring it into Northumberland and thence farther to the south in Britain, even to the Midlands and to Essex. Dr. Reeves enumerates thirty-seven dedications to St. Columba in Ireland, and fifty-three in Scotland, yet the list is incomplete.

Other Irishmen emulated St. Columba; in 592 St. Moluoc, or Lugaith, went a mission to Lismore, an island in Loch Linnhe, Argyleshire; St. Donnan went to the island of Eig, where he was martyred in 617; and in 671 St. Maelruba sailed to Caledonia and founded the church of Applecross in Ross-shire; these are but a few examples of a host, who gave themselves entirely to the service of the Cross, far from home and kindred. But how dear was the memory of home to these self-denying confessors is brought home by the Irish place-names to be found in Scotland.

As the early emigrants from England to America remembered their homes in the names of the new towns which they made—York, Boston, etc.; to Australia, in Melbourne, etc.; to New Zealand—in Christchurch, etc.; so did the Irish missionaries flood western Scotland and the isles with place-names from the home country. While such prefixes as *Kil*, or *Cill*, which means “a church,” and is equivalent to the Welsh *Llan*; and *Glas*, or *Clas*, which is a Keltic word for “monastery,” tell their own story when found in Scotland.

## CHAPTER X.

### MONASTICISM.

**I**N the British Church the whole system was monastic; secular priests were in a minority, and they were married. St. Patrick was the son of a deacon and grandson of a priest, and in his Canons he recognises a married clergy, but it was only by its monastic methods that the Keltic Church was able to spread its missions so widely, and to achieve such rapid and remarkable success.

To picture a Keltic monastery the cloistered garth surrounded by buildings must be banished from the mind. Keltic monasticism was altogether different from the religious orders of the Middle Ages; but it was on exactly the same lines, in fabric and system, as the early monasteries in the deserts of Egypt and Syria; and this similarity has to be accounted for.

Communication between Alexandria and the Greek colony of Marseilles was constant, and in the infancy of the Church, a monastery was formed on the island of Lerins, just off the south coast of France, about sixty miles west from Toulon, which must have been well-known to the Britons through commerce. St. Ninian would probably call there on his way from Rome to Tours, and St. Patrick is traditionally said to have visited it.

John Cassian, an Eastern monk, went there to live,

keeping up a regular post-service with Syria and Egypt, he there modelled the ascetic life on the Eastern rule, which he set forth in his *Collations of the Monks*, a book describing the daily life of the monks of the Nitrian desert; and this was the ideal followed by the Britons. It was a severely ascetic life disciplining the flesh and releasing the soul for a grand spiritual work.

The British Isles were evangelised by a mother monastery sending out groups of missionaries who obtained grants of land from the local chieftains on which they founded daughter monasteries, which formed part of the possessions of the *Tribe of the Saint* of the original house. Such was Llandaff and St. David's, which had numerous Teilo and Dewi churches far from the centres of St. Teilo's and St. David's chief foundations.

When the monks received possession of the land and the monastery was founded, the township in which it was situated also became the property of the Tribe of the Saint, and all serfs therein became free. (*Dimetian Code, Laws of Howel the Good, ii. 22. § 718*).

Ireland received its monasticism from Wales, and the same principles prevailed in the whole Keltic Church.

The office of Abbot descended in the family in a similar manner as in the East, and as the Nestorian Patriarchate of the Assyrians of the present day passes to a nephew or other relation; through this custom a Keltic monastery was sometimes ruled by a lay abbot.

Abbots of some of the greater monasteries were frequently bishops, but the greater number were in priest's orders, and in this system one or more bishops were kept in the monastery to perform episcopal functions; but they held a subordinate position, following the bidding of the abbot, or abbess. Thus it was with St. Bridget,

when she founded the monastery at Kildare she selected Condlaed to be her bishop "to govern the church with her in episcopal dignity."

In the very first days of the Church a small oratory containing an altar, termed a Martyrium, was built over a martyr's grave, and this led to the enclosing of relics in an altar by all future generations.

The British Church followed this custom, only it was strangely mixed with the pagan idea of foundation burials—the sacrifice of, or burial of, a living person—to ensure the strength and success of the fabric. Child sacrifices were common among the Romans, and they have been found in the foundations of walls at Colchester and elsewhere; also among the British and Irish heathen, and the living foundation sacrifice is a feature in the Merlin stories.

For the dedication of Cill Fiacla, St. Patrick gave one of his teeth (*Trepartite Life*, i. 149), and St. Columba of Tir-da-Glas cut off one of his fingers for a similar purpose (*Acta SS. Hibern, Cod. Salamanc.* 451).

St. Columba of Iona in founding his monastery on that island first wished to bury somebody, and Odhran offered himself (*Cambro-British Saints*, 45). This was evidently a live burial, then considered equal to a martyr; although it was afterwards said that he was buried because he denied the Resurrection. Another case is that of a leper who was one of St. Patrick's followers; he offered himself, and "He was the first dead man that went to make the clay of Clonmacnois" (*Book of Lismore*, 221). Thus was the principle of enclosing relics observed by a people who desired to follow the customs of the Catholic Church, although the Irish, as yet, had no martyrs.

The Keltic monastery copied the ordinary pagan

settlement in having a Dun, Cashel, Caher, Rath, Lis, or Caer, which is a wall surrounding an area in which the dwellings were erected; indeed, some of the pagan forts were given to the Christians in which to found their monasteries; as the Dun of Muirbhech Mill, in Arran Mor; the fort of the kings of Ulster, and that of Maelgwn Gwynedd, which he gave to St. Cybi, etc. One of the pagan forts, Caher Namactirech in Kerry, will give some idea of the appearance of a Keltic monastery (Fig. 24).

Within the cashel were the huts of the monks, constructed of wattle or of stone of bee-hive shape, with two or more oratories. The abbot had a hut on higher ground as at Skellig Mhichel and Iona.

When St. Cadoc made his monastery at Llancarvan he raised a great bank of earth to enclose a very handsome cemetery where the bodies of the faithful might be buried near the church, and he chose a place for himself and surrounded it by a bank of earth (*Cambro-British Saints*, 34, 35).

It was the cashel, or lis, that gave its name to the town of Lismore, the origin is found at the time that the monks were making the earthen wall for St. Carthagh's monastery. A woman passing the spot asked "What are you doing there?" "We are making a *lis beg*," or small enclosure, they replied. "*Lis beg*," exclaimed the woman, "I do not call it a *lis beg*, but a *lis mor*," a large enclosure; and Lis Mor it has since remained (O'Curry, *Manners and Customs of the Irish*, iii. 4.).

St. Patrick's monastery at Ferta, outside Armagh, was planned with "seven score feet for the cashel, twenty-seven feet for the great House (the refectory), seventeen feet for the kitchen, and seven feet for the oratory" (Todd, *St. Patrick*, 477).



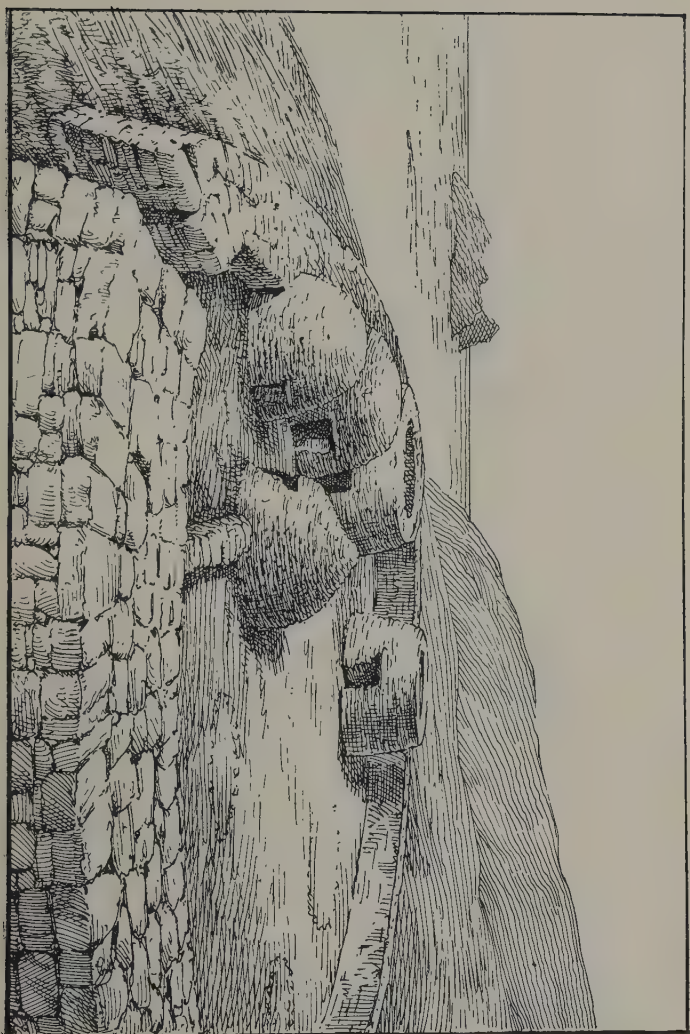


FIG. 24, CAHER NAMACLIHCCH, VENTRY, CO. KERRY.

Many accounts of the building of monasteries are extant, as that of St. Bridget. We are told that when she had marked out the enclosure at Kildare she saw the prince's pack-horses laden with pealed rods, which she asked for, and obtained for the building of her dwellings (*Book of Lismore*).

When the cashel and the huts were of rough stones they were sometimes whitened with whitewash until they were "as white as snow." The monastery of Pawl Hen at Ty Gwyn, on the coast near St. Davids was thus treated, and from its whiteness gained its name.

Three concentric walls gird the hill, on the top of which the church and monastery of Nendrum stood, the uppermost wall is seen in figure 38; and the church of



FIG. 25. DRY-WALLED HUT, SKELLI G MHICHIL.

Dundesert, in Antrim, was within a double wall and two wide ditches.

Enclosing walls are most frequently seen in Ireland, and on the islands off its west coast; the Keltic monasteries in England were destroyed by the Anglo-Saxons, but there

are several examples in Wales, especially in Pembrokeshire. At Caerau Church, near Cardiff, the surrounding wall of earth is visible, it is termed a *caer* in Wales, and from this *caer* the church took its names. Ruins of similar enclosed monasteries remain in Scotland and the islands off its coast.

The method of dry wall building would not allow the erection of large structures, and more than one church, or oratory, was built within a monastery. The favourite number was seven—as in the East—to typify the Seven Churches of Asia mentioned in the Revelation of St. John. There were seven within the cashels of Glendalough, and of Cashel, and in several other places groups of three and four are frequent.

From Adamnan we learn that inside the wall of St. Columba's monastery on Iona the monk's dwellings were of wood and wattles, and that his own cell of planks was built on higher ground than the others; there was a refectory with a fireplace and a vessel of water, and the first oratory was of oak with a side chamber; the saint also built a hospice of faggots and interwoven twigs.

Remains of one of these monasteries on the Skellig Mhichel, off Kerry, are difficult to reach, but some of the dry-walled cells and oratories are yet standing, and pilgrimages are still made to it. The six bee-hive cells are rectangular inside, they have paved floors and two or three recesses, or cupboards, in the inside walls; there are also double rows of stone pegs on which to hang the satchels and other objects. The largest of the three oratories is mortared, the only structure so treated, and this is of later date, after St. Michael was invoked in the sixth or seventh century. There are five burial places, two wells, and some rude stone crosses within the precincts (Fig. 26).

St. Molaise's monastery on Inismurray, off the coast of Sligo, is enclosed by a cashel averaging 10 ft. thick, and originally about 15ft. high, built of slabs of sandstone without cement. Remains of seven bee-hive huts and three oratories are left; the largest oratory measures 24ft. by 12ft., and the smallest—about 10ft. square—retains its altar. The enclosing wall contains a number of

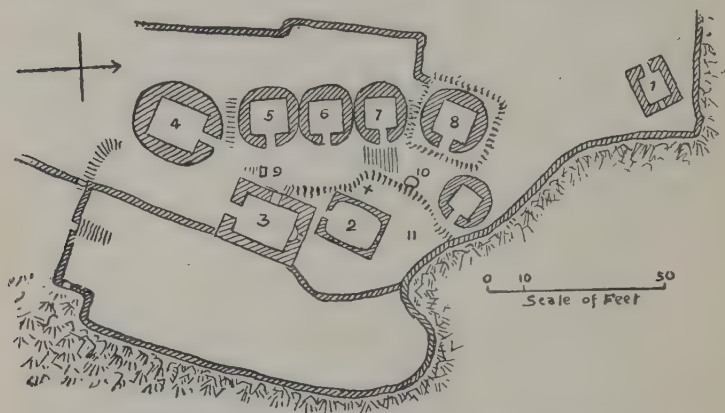


FIG. 26. PLAN OF THE MONASTERY ON SKELLIG MHICIL.

circular and rectangular chambers within its thickness, which were probably cells of hermits or anchorites; this feature is also found on Ardoilean (High Island), off Connemara, and on St. Senach's Island off Kerry.

There are many such monasteries on the islands of Scotland, of which one on the Brough of Deerness, off Orkney, is a type (Fig. 27). The cashel is dry-walled on the outside with earth banked up against it on the inside; and in this enclosure are the remains of eighteen dry-walled cells, which are mostly oval in plan. Only one oratory remains, and this was surrounded by a wall 3ft. thick, an enclosure again noticed on page 94.

These religious settlements are on the same plan as

the Eastern monasteries, the Laura of St. Sabas near Jerusalem, or that on Mount Thabor in Syria, which was described by Arculf to Adamnan as having a surrounding wall enclosing dome-shaped cells and three small oratories (*De Locis Sanctis*, ii. 27).

The rule of life observed by the Keltic monks was very severe; and when St. Columbanus wrote his Rule, founded

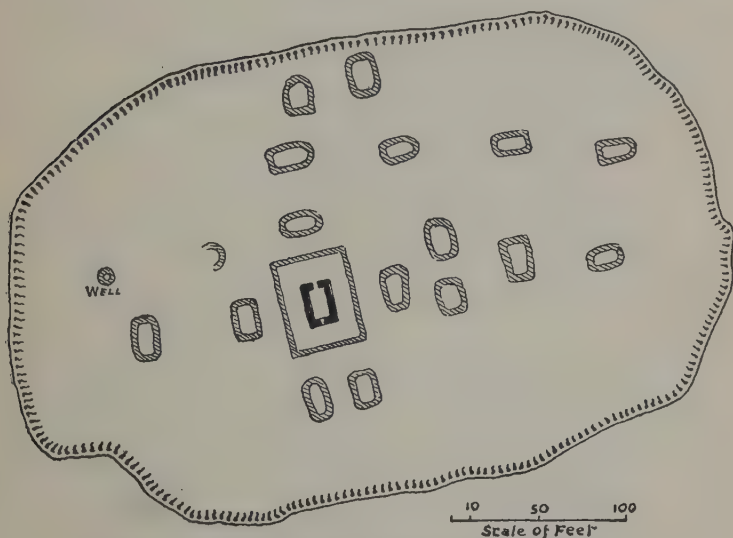


FIG. 27. PLAN OF THE MONASTERY ON DEERNESS.

on Cassian's *Collations* in the sixth century, it only put on record the mode of life which had for long been observed. This required unreserved obedience, constant and severe labour, frequent fasting and daily self-denial; and corporal punishment was given for the least deviation from orders.

The abbot's chief officials were a steward, who looked after the temporal affairs of the establishment; the baker, who not only made the bread but provided all other food;



and a cook. The students had to help in grinding the corn and looking after the live stock.

Members of the community were divided into three degrees—(1) The elders, who gave their time to prayer, preaching and instructing the youth; (2) The lay brethren, who were principally employed in agriculture; and (3) The students and servants.

Study was very close, and the elders of the monastery at Lughmagh under Bishop Mochta are thus noticed in the Martyrology of Donegal:—

“ Threescore psalm-singing seniors  
Where his household, royal the number,  
Without tillage, reaping, or kiln-drying,  
With no other work except reading.”

Mass was said on Sundays and Holy Days; and all the community had to learn the Psalter by heart, and say it every day. In the Book of Mulling a form of Vespers is given.

The diet of the monks consisted of bread, milk, eggs and fish, and on Sundays a dish of beef or mutton was usually allowed (Reeves, *Life of Columba*, 117). Their dress was a white tunic and hood, and an amphibalus, or cloak, and some of them wore goat or fawn skins. It was such a cloak that St. Alban received from the British priest at Verulam in exchange for his military cloak, to enable the pursued cleric to escape from his persecutors, and St. Amphibalus has since been commemorated by the Church in the name of the cloak (see page 63).

From the Irish manuscripts in the monastery of St. Gall in Switzerland, we learn that the monks travelled in companies, and were provided with long walking-sticks, leather wallets and flasks; they wore long flowing hair and painted (or tattooed) emblems, or pictures on their bodies, especially the eyelids.



The tonsure must not be overlooked, for although but a minor affair in these days, it was accounted a vital point of discipline in the time of St. Augustine of Canterbury. Unlike the coronal form of the Roman tonsure, the Keltic monks shaved the whole front of the head from ear to ear, for which they were nick-named "adze-heads" by the pagans.

Should one of the Tribe of the Saint wish to become a regular monk, the postulant had to remain outside the gate of the cashel for ten days, and if he withstood the ordeal of jeering and ridicule to which he was subjected by the people, he was then admitted.

In the Leabhar Breac the duties of a priest of a small church, outside the precincts of a monastery, are thus defined:—"Of him is required baptism and communion, that is The Sacrifice, and to sing intercessions for the living and the dead; the Offering to be made every Sunday and every chief solemnity, and every chief festival. All the canonical hours are to be observed, and the whole Psalter is to be sung daily unless teaching and spiritual direction hinder him."

The Keltic prefix Clas, or Glas, means a monastery which, in many instances, is the only indication that a town or village was originally the site of a British monastery. This is seen in Glasbury, on the borders of Breconshire and Radnorshire; the Welsh name was "Y Clâs ar Wy," the monastery on the Wye, which was founded by St. Cynidr, a grandson of Brychan, who was buried there. The prefix is found in Glastonbury, Somerset; Glasnevin, near Dublin; Glasgow, in Lanark; Glasserton, in Wigton; Glassbhein in Inverness; and in many other place-names in the British Isles.

**Anchorites.** The life of an anchorite was the height

of asceticism, and, as in the East so in the British Isles, there were hermits and anchorites.

The monks of the Thebaid sought solitude in the desert, and the Keltic monk desiring a solitary life sought for a desert in which to make his cell, although it may not have been a sandy waste as in Syria or Egypt. Many place-names preserve the tradition of such sites; *Disert*, *Desert* or *Dysart* signifying a solitary place, either in the sea or on land, is prefixed to certain names such as Desertmartin, or Martin's Desert, in Londonderry.

In a great many lives of the Keltic saints they are said to have sought a desert in which to live; Baitan sought a solitude in the sea, a desert island, where he might live as a hermit (Adamnan, *Life of Columba*, I.xx); Bede says that St. Cuthbert died in the desert, on Farne Island (iv. 27. 29); and such deserts are found on Iona; a place called Ankersbower lies near the parish of Disert in Westmeath, and on nearly all the small rocky islets off the coast of Scotland, the remains of anchorites' cells are still to be found.

Cuthbert's *desert* on Farne Island was entirely destitute of water and unproductive of corn or trees, but with the assistance of the brethren of Lindisfarne he built a small dwelling with a wall around it, a habitation and an oratory, and a well was dug in the floor of the dwelling. For sustenance he sowed corn, but nothing grew, he then tried the more humble barley, and had a plentiful crop (*Bede Hist. Eccl. IV. xxviii*).

Although St. Cuthbert conformed to the Latin Church in the observance of Easter he was trained by the Keltic monks of Melrose and retained their customs, so that in the fuller account of his cell, given by Bede in his *Life of St. Cuthbert* (c. xvii), we have the description of the abode of an anchorite of the British Church.

The surrounding wall of the dwelling was nearly circular, in measure from wall to wall about 4 or 5 perches. The wall externally was higher than the stature of a man, but inside the pious inhabitant made it much higher by cutting the living rock, in order to curb the petulance of his eyes as well as his thoughts, and to raise his whole mind to heavenly desires, since he could behold nothing but heaven from his dwelling. He constructed this wall, not of hewn stone, nor of bricks and mortar, but of unwrought stones and turf which he dug out of the middle of the place. His dug-out was divided into two parts, an oratory and a dwelling. He constructed both by digging round, or by cutting out most of the natural rock inside and out; but the roof was of rough beams thatched with straw.

Some of the early British oratories were surrounded by walls, leaving a very narrow court around the house of prayer; this is seen in the monastery on the Brough of Deerness (Fig. 27), at St. Fechin's Chapel on Ardoilean, off Connemara, and around St. Beuno's oratory at Clynnog, Carnarvonshire (Fig. 44).

**Monastic Schools.** The extent of learning in the British Church is by no means understood and the knowledge attained in the monastic schools was not nearly so superficial as in many scholastic establishments in modern England.

In their wisdom the founders of monasteries in the British Isles included a teaching staff, and many of their schools grew to large proportions. So great was the thirst for learning, so great the numbers of pupils resorting to these monasteries, that they could not be accommodated within the cashel, which was reserved for the monks, and the students had to build booths or huts outside the enclosing wall.

At Bangor Iscoed, in North Wales, there were over two thousand monks. Bede says that they were divided into seven parts with a ruler over each division, and that no part had less than three hundred men (*Hist. Eccl. II. ii.*). In St. Cuana's monastery there were over one thousand seven hundred and forty-six pupils, and St. Lasrian had fifteen hundred.

A great educational establishment was situated in the valley of Rhossan at Whitland, Carmarthenshire. It was known as Alba, Rosnat, and Ty Gwyn, that is the White Monastery, which gained this name from the whiteness of its dry-walled buildings of rough stones which were whitewashed, and not because it was *more*



FIG. 28. STONE OF PAWL HEN (PAUL THE AGED).  
FOUND AT PANT Y POLION. THE INSCRIPTION READS.—

SERVATVR FIDAEI PATRIEQ[VE] SEMPER AMATOR  
HIC PAVLINVS JACET CV[LT]OR PIE[NTIS]SIMV[S]

*Romano*, of dressed stones as St. Ninian's *Candida Casa* at Whithorn. Although Ty Gwyn is usually attributed to Pawl Hen in 480 there is a tradition that it was

founded by St. Patrick before he went to Ireland (*Buhez St. Nonn*), and much evidence points to a confirmation of this; place-names supporting documentary assertions. A ruined chapel on the shore of Whitesand Bay bears his name, a rock near by is known as Carn Patrick, and one of the gates to St. David's Cathedral precincts is still known as Porth Padrig. Other things also unite in supporting the statement.

It was the famed school at Ty Gwyn which was founded by Pawl Hen, in a monastery already founded by St. Patrick, and this explains why so many notable Irishmen studied there. To that monastery went Gildas "with a great quantity of books."

In the time of the Abbot Mancennus, in the fifth century, the father of St. David was told to deposit various gifts in that house for the son to be born thirty years hence. At that period there were a hundred and fifty students at Ty Gwyn; and there lived and taught Pawl Hen, the instructor of St. David, and many who entered its school were of princely family.

It was a house for both sexes, similar to St. Bridget's monastery at Kildare, and amongst the women were St. Non, or Nonnita, the mother of St. David; Drustice, the daughter of a British king; Brignat, and others. We are told that a partition in the church divided the men from the women.

The Irish pirates so harried the coast that St. David removed the monastery to the secluded position at Menevia where St. David's cathedral now stands. Sepulchral crosses of the early monks have been rescued from the ruins of Rosnat, where part of the original cashel remains.

At Llanancarvan, Glamorganshire, the *Chorea Sanctorum* was one of the earliest monasteries founded in Wales,



some traditions say by St. Germain, and its school was for a time ruled by St. Dubricus before he went to Llandaff.

From the Life of St. Cadoc, we learn that his monastery contained a hundred clerks, a hundred freedmen, and a hundred workmen; this was the "family" of the "Tribe of the Saint" (*Cambro-British Saints*, 45).

The school of St. Finnian was founded by him at Clonard, in Meath, in the beginning of the sixth century, and it became the most distinguished educational centre of that period. The usual number of pupils is said to have been three thousand, and St. Finnian was termed "a doctor of wisdom and tutor of the saints of Ireland" by the ancient annalists; he was also styled "preceptor of the twelve apostles of Ireland."

On one occasion St. Finnian sent his disciple Senach to see how the pupils were engaged, and his report was that "some are employed in manual labour, some are studying the Scriptures, and others, especially Columba of Tir-da-Glas, are engaged in prayer" (*Cod. Salamanc*, 200).

At the monastery of Glasnevin, near Dublin, there was a noted school to which Columba came after he left Clonard; but the pupils were dispersed by an outbreak of the plague in 544, and it seems never to have been revived.

In a letter of Alcuin, written from the court of Charlemagne to Colu, in the monastery of Clonmacnois, he thanks the lecturer for the care he has taken in educating his Gallic and Saxon pupils; and it was probably in that same monastery that Dicuil wrote his standard geographical book, *Liber de Mensura orbis Terrae*.

The reputation of the Irish schools induced the greatest people to send their children to them, Anglo-Saxons and French resorted thither; Dagobert II, the king of



France, received his education in the school at Slane, on the Hill of Slane, county Meath. St. Aldhelm of Sherborn, a Saxon, testifies to the superiority of Irish learning, and Bede says that Bishop Agilbert, a Frenchman, lived a long time in Ireland for the purpose of reading the Scripture (*Hist. Eccl. III. viii*).

The Keltic Church was especially devoted to the study and exposition of the Holy Scriptures, and this finds an illustration in the works of Gildas, which bristle with biblical quotations.

In the beginning of Christianity in this land the Britons used the same Old Latin version of the Holy Scriptures as was quoted by St. Cyprian, who died in 258, and by St. Paulinus of Nola, who died in 431. But it should be more widely known that British scholars had so thoroughly mastered the Greek and Latin languages that they compiled a British and Irish version from the Old Latin text, in which the Books called apocryphal were excluded. The passages of Scripture in the writings of some of the Britons and Irishmen agree with no other versions either before the time of St. Jerome nor with the Vulgate. It was peculiar to the British Isles, and explains the words of St. Chrysostom when he says that there were British versions of the Scriptures (*Opp. P. viii, p. iii, ed. Savill*).

This version is seen in the *Domnach-Airgid*, which is supposed to have belonged to St. Patrick, now in the Royal Irish Academy. It is quoted by Fastidius and St. Patrick in the fifth century, by Cummianus and Adamnan in the seventh century, by Nennius and even by Asser in the ninth century. It is seen in the fifth century Gospels in Trinity College, Dublin; and in the Cathach, or Psalter, written by St. Columba.

left his impression of Coelestius in writing—"he was a huge fellow, stuffed to repletion with Scot's porridge."

Their doctrine was condemned in a council at Carthage in 412, at Jerusalem and again at Lydda in 415, and at Ephesus in 431. This Briton who excited Rome and agitated the whole of Christendom, wrote a Treatise on the Trinity, a Book of Testimonies from Scripture, and Commentaries on St. Paul's Epistles.

Fastidius, a British bishop in the fifth century, wrote a book addressed to the "widow" Fatalis, which he compares to country bread, as being more nourishing for a hungry man than bread made of the finest flour. In it he exhorts the people to hold the faith and keep the Lord's commandments; he quotes from Pelagius, and he composed a beatitude for the Britons—"Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, and the people whom He hath chosen for His own inheritance."

Faustus is said by Nennius to have been one of the sons of Vortigern of Britain, and to have been brought up and educated by St. Germain; he must have passed over to Gaul at an early age, where he studied Greek philosophy and rhetoric. He entered the monastery of Lerins and studied the Scriptures, and he was elected abbot of that community in 433; he eventually became bishop of Riez, in Provence. He wrote many treatises, epistles and homilies against Arianism and Pelagianism; exhorting the monks to good living; and in praise of St. Maximus.

The works of Gildas have been quoted in these pages, and the numerous books which he took to the monastery of Ty Gwyn are mentioned. He was well-versed in the Scriptures and his warnings to the people to turn from their evil ways are thrust home with great force. He wrote his Epistle about the year 547, and his History in 560.

The *History of the Britons* is attributed to the authorship of a British monk named Nennius, who was a disciple of St. Elbod at Bangor, North Wales. Certainly the Easter cycle introduced by Bishop Elbod in that monastery is used by Nennius, but that alone does not assert his claim. It is but a name, nothing is known of him, but the book was evidently written by a Briton of the ninth century, with interpolations to the year 946. Its popularity may be estimated by the numerous editions, being transcribed in Latin, Welsh and Irish.

Amongst the Irish there were more authors whose works have been handed down to us than is the case with the British. St. Patrick, who was a Britisher although the greater part of his work lay among the Irish, laments that "I did not learn as others, and my speech is translated into a foreign tongue (Latin), as can be easily observed from the homeliness of my style of writing." With these disabilities how difficult it must have been for St. Patrick to teach his converts, whom, it is said, were taught their letters by him in a passage written on the walls, in much the same way as a blackboard and chalk is used to-day. But even this untutored apostle has left his *Confession* and *Epistle to Coroticus*. The first reveals the conditions of life in that period and breathes a spirit of intense faith, while the second is an outspoken rebuke to Coroticus for his treatment of the Christians and the people generally.

Poets adorned the Keltic Church, amongst whom St. Columba is one of the most famous. St. Baithen of Westmeath wrote an Irish *Acts of Columba*; and about the year 640 Abbot Aileran of Clonard wrote a theological work which shows a thorough knowledge of the Bible and its Hebrew and Greek versions; he freely quotes and discusses passages from Jerome, Augustine, Origen and other

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Fathers of the Church. He was conversant with the Vulgate, but with it he quotes from the Old Latin version, producing mixed Latin in his pages.

An Irish monk of the seventh century, named Augustine, wrote *The Wonders of Scripture* and *The Difficulties of Scripture*, and his erudition may be realised when later scholars, in ignorance of the real author, attributed the works to St. Augustine of Hippo. He knew the works of the Fathers and Doctors, and from his writings it is found that the Canon of Scripture accepted by the Keltic Church was the same as the present English canon, but differing from the Latin.

In the ninth century *Commentaries* of Sedulius the Younger, an Irishman of Strathclyde, we perceive that he was a Hebrew and Greek scholar.

John Scotus, a monk in the monastery of Bangor in Ireland, was—in the ninth century—engaged for Greek translations by Charles the Bald, and he wrote some theological works. Greek is found in the Book of Armagh, and in Cormac's Glossary of Irish names he gives the Greek roots. No doubt the Greek monks who fled from the persecution of the iconoclastic emperors of Byzantium, some of whom reached Ireland, gave an impetus to the study of that language.

Another great scholar of this period was Dicuil the Geographer, a monk—it is thought—of Clonmacnois. In 825 he wrote a work called *Liber de Mensura orbis Terræ*, which in truthful record and description surpasses all other writings on that subject of that period amongst the learned of the Old World.

From the widely travelled British and Irish explorers and pilgrims Dicuil gathered his materials. He wrote an accurate account of Iceland, and described the mid-



night sun long before it was discovered by the Danes. From the account of Fidelis, a monk who went with other priests and laymen from Ireland on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, Dicuil was able to describe those countries through which they passed. They went through Egypt, visited the pyramids and sailed through Hadrian's canal from the Nile to the Red Sea, and gained the Holy Land by way of the Sinai desert, seeing, first hand, the life observed in the Eastern monasteries.

From his pen Irishmen of the ninth century knew exact measurements of the pyramids, the character of Egypt, the Red Sea, Palestine, Iceland, etc.

After the pagan Anglo-Saxons of the eastern part of England had received Christianity, some of them resorted to the famous schools of Ireland. Bede speaks of them as forsaking their native island and going thither, "either for the sake of sacred studies, or a more ascetic life; some of them devoted themselves to a monastic life, others chose rather to apply themselves to study, going from one master's cell to another. The Scots willingly received them all, and took care to supply them with daily food without cost, as also to furnish them with books for their studies, and teaching them free of charge" (*Hist. Eccl. III. xxvii*).

Among others of the Saxons who were educated in Ireland, may be mentioned Kings Aldfrith and Oswy of Northumbria, Bishops Egbert, Ethelwin, Chad and Willibrord.

**Liturgical Language.** The vernacular of the Britons was a Keltic language when the Romans came to Britain. The only form of written characters was the Ogham, an assortment of straight and angular lines and half lines branching from or crossing a parent stem, which

arose amongst the Irish, and was introduced into those districts of Britain into which the Irish penetrated. The presence of the Romans caused the British, and later the Irish, to adopt Latin, and these characters being cut on some of the ogham stones, recording the same phrase as in oghams, supplied a key whereby the deciphering of the archaic markings of the Irish was accomplished.

For the first seven centuries the Latin characters in these bilingual inscriptions—which are all memorials of the dead—were entirely of capital letters; after that date debased miniscules (*small characters*) appear, and thus many of the stones are shown to be of the Christian period.

Tacitus says that the Roman language—that is Latin—was adopted by the leading inhabitants of Britain under the policy of Agricola (*Agricola*, *xvi*). That was between the years 78 and 85; and the dawn of letters in Ireland appears to have been in the third century, when the Irish tradition places the first knowledge of Christianity in that island.

Most of the British, Irish and Scottish writings before the end of the sixth century which are extant—Psalters, Books of the Gospels, and a few liturgical fragments—are in Latin. The vernacular is only to be found in the rubrics of the seventh century, or later service books. These were presumably for the use of the priests in the remoter parts of Wales and Ireland who were not in touch with Roman civilization. Sermons and instruction were no doubt given in the native tongue; there is part of a sermon in the old Irish language on Self-denial and Compassion in the eighth century *Codex Camaracensis*; and other sermons in the vernacular consist of one on the feast of All Saints, in the *Leabhar Breac*; one on the Judgment and the Resurrection in the eleventh century

*Leabhar na h-Uidre*; and one on the Beatitudes in the twelfth century Bodleian *MS. Laud.* 610.

St. Patrick lamented the crudity of his Latin because he was taught and instructed in sermons in the native tongue (*Confession*).

Greek was occasionally introduced in the liturgical works by some of the scribes; the Latin text of the Lords' Prayer is written in Greek characters in St. Matthew's Gospel in the Book of Armagh; it is seen in the Antiphonary of Bangor, and St. Brendon is said to have found a missal in Greek in the Welsh monastery of St. Gildas.

**Scribes.** Writing formed a large part of the work of Keltic monks and mention is made by them of waxed tablets, styles, skins, inkhorns, etc. Light is thrown on the elaborate appearance of some of these writing implements in the account of one son of the chieftain Dimma, of Wrexford, who went to the school of Cuan, at Airbre, and when he again went into the world of strife it was in a dress of purple, with a quiver of purple arrows; his *writing tablet bound with brass over his shoulder* and wearing shoes embroidered with gold and bound with brass (*Codex Salmanticensis*, p. 405).

It may be supposed that comparatively few of the monks were accomplished writers, and those who could exercise the art were treasured. A scribe was held in such great honour in Ireland that anyone injuring him was subject to the same penalty as the murderer of a bishop or an abbot.

Amongst the early extant manuscripts some of them present beautiful regularity and the decorative features are so elaborate and minute that the artists' eyesight must have been remarkable and their patience inexhaustible.

Uncomplimentary remarks have been made on their

figure drawing, but the present age is not in a position to criticise, as nothing but conventionally designed and decorative figures are left to us.

The names of many scribes are known, and pre-eminent amongst them is Columba. It was his very zeal of writing and love of books which led to his exile from Ireland. He had borrowed a Psalter from St. Finnian of Moville, in county Down, who was also an accomplished scribe, of which he made a copy without receiving the owner's permission; St. Finnian claimed the copy of his own work, and as Columba would not part with it he was sued in the court of King Diarmait of Meath. Columba lost his case, the king deciding that as the Brehon Law declared "to every cow belongs its calf," so to every book belongs its copy. The feuds which Columba raised in his indignation at this decision compelled him to leave Ireland, and settling in Iona, he there carried his decorative writing to perfection and Iona became celebrated for its manuscripts; many of its succeeding abbots were scribes, and, in a way, founded a School of Iona, the art of which was carried into Northumbria, where the beautiful Book of Lindisfarne was written.

Baithene, the successor of St. Columba in the abbacy of Iona, was so accurate a scribe that the omission of a single letter—i—was the only fault in a Psalter which he had written; and he finished the Psalter on which St. Columba was engaged when he died in 597.

No actual British manuscript is known to exist, the Anglo-Saxons' work of destruction was too thorough; there are, however, a few books of the Britons in Wales, while many examples of Irish calligraphy are extant in the British Isles and in those countries to which they were carried by the Irish missionaries.







PAGE OF ORNAMENT FROM THE BOOK OF DURROW.



The sixth century Book of Durrow in Trinity College, Dublin, is one of the earliest books extant, in which is seen the marvellously intricate interlacements which were such a feature of the Irish scribes, an indigenous development of the patterns of Roman tessellated pavements, or possibly of some early Eastern forms of a date long before the advent of any Byzantine exiles. This is said to be St. Columba's work; and the Psalter, or Cathach of Columba, which he was writing at the end of his life, is preserved in the Royal Irish Academy.

The sixth century "Gospels of St. Molaise" are lost, a loss attributable to modern vandalism, which has so ably followed the methods of the heathen Saxons and Norsemen. The Book of Mulling, the wonderfully worked Book of Kells, and the Book of Dimma, are three treasures of Trinity College, Dublin; and the Antiphonary of Bangor, now in the Ambrosian Library at Milan, are all of the seventh century. The Gospels of Lindisfarne was written between the years 687 and 721, by an Angle of Northumbria who had been educated in the British Church. This, like other Texts of the Gospels of that period, was so prized that no cover could be too good for it, and it was the protection of the metal cover which preserved the book when it fell into the Irish Sea off the mouth of the Derwent, and after many days was found stranded on the shore near Whithorn.

From the colophon of the Lindisfarne manuscript, and from Simeon of Durham (*History of the Church of Durham*, c. xxvii) it is known that the binding boards were encased in silver and gold, and adorned with gems by Billfrid the anchorite, who was a master in the art of the goldsmith. The valuable cover has gone, but the more valuable Gospels are preserved in the British Museum.

These are but a few of the surviving manuscripts of the Brito-Irish Church; but they are enough to show that the Church of these islands was no negligible quantity, in any respect, in Christendom.

St. Dega, an Irish monk and bishop, who died in 586, is said to have spent his nights in transcribing manuscripts, and his days in reading them and otherwise employing himself with working in copper and iron. Caisin



FIG. 29. SACHEL OF THE BREAC MOEDOC.

was a scribe in the monastery of Lusk, in country Dublin, who died in 695. Sedulius wrote a Greek Psalter which is now preserved in the monastery of St. Michael in Lorrain; and Sweeny, the abbot of Lismore, was a well-known scribe.

The diligence of these monks in transcribing the few works at their disposal, with the object of making known the true doctrine of the Church, is illustrated by the words

of the deputation of clergy who went to Constantinople to consult the Patriarch Methodius on the Easter question in 842-847. They said that they came from the *Schools of the Ocean*, which may have embraced the British Isles, or more especially Iona. When asked by what traditions of the fathers and Doctors they governed themselves, they replied that they had only one book of the Father Chrysostom, from which they reaped great advantage. It was not only passed from one to another but it was diligently transcribed, insomuch that none of their clans, nor territories, nor cities, was without a copy of the book.

Many other scribes' names have been handed down to us, and so highly were their works prized that they were enclosed in cases; and seeing how the evangelists were constantly moving from place to place satchels were made for them, that they might be suspended from the shoulder. A few of the satchels of beautifully worked leather are preserved, as for the Book of Armagh, a missal at Oxford, and the reliquary of St. Moedoc.

## CHAPTER XI.

### MISSIONARIES.

THE Keltic Church was deeply imbued with the missionary spirit; from the very first, the Britons receiving the glad message from those who came from a great distance, braving the dangers of travel to extend the Kingdom of Christ to a people who, to them, were barbarous, strove to extend it in the same spirit of faith into yet farther and more inimical regions. First through Britain, which then included Wales, into North Britain and Ireland, thence to Caledonia and to Northumbria.

With St. Ninian and St. Patrick as examples, Columba now inspired the mission spirit with a fervour which has never since been surpassed. The obliteration of Christianity over all eastern Britain stopped their progressive work in that direction, but it fired those in Ireland with greater zeal to carry the Gospel to the very home of those savage tribes which brought such tribulation to the faithful of this island, and they went fearlessly among them, not singly, but in companies, founding over five monasteries in the Netherlands, eighteen in Germany and Switzerland, and five in North Italy, while in France they were very numerous.

Among the home missions may be included Brittany and the whole of the British Isles. From the fifth cen-

ture the Britons took special care of their kinsmen in Armorica, or Brittany, which was for a long time left untouched by the Gallican Church. Sts. Brieuc, Corentin, Frugdual, Gildas, Magloire, Malo, Samson, Teilo, etc., are some of the Britons who went to that country. St. Bernard of Clairvaux compared the Irish missionaries to the continent to a flood; and St. Aldhelm declared that those who came to England came in "fleets," and Walafrid Strabo said that travelling had become a second nature with the Irish.

St. Ninian ministered to the southern Picts, Columba to the northern Picts, and Kentigern to the Picts of both Provinces, with many nameless heroes who carried the Gospel to the Shetlands, Orkneys, Hebrides, Iceland and the Faroe Isles. The *Landnáma* states that wherever the Norwegian settlers in these islands found monks or the remains of their buildings they called the places by some name beginning with *Pap*, which is equivalent to "Papa," or "a priest." In Orkney we find Papa Westray and Papa Stronsay; in Shetland, Papa Stour and Papa Little; in the Hebrides and on the mainland of Scotland a study of the map will reveal many examples.

St. Aidan was the missionary to the Northumbrians, Diuna and Ceollach to the Mercians, Fursa to the East Anglians at Burghcastle in Suffolk, and an Irish monastery was founded at Bosham, in Sussex, among the pagan South Saxons. Bede says that the people of that country were "ignorant of the name of God and the faith; but there was among them a certain monk of the Scottish (Irish) nation, whose name was Dicul, who had a very small monastery at the place called Bosham, encompassed by wood and seas, and in it there were five or six brothers who served the Lord



in humility and poverty" when Bishop Wilfrid arrived in Sussex in 681. We have no means of ascertaining whether a fragment of the British Church in this unfrequented spot had escaped the notice of the heathen Saxons and was kept alive by the Irish, or whether an Irish missionary had crossed from Brittany to preach to the South Saxons.

It appears that the Irish had continued here in the midst of the Saxons for many centuries and had kept in correspondence with Ireland. The Danes occupied Waterford, in Ireland, in 853, and Canute's daughter was buried in Bosham Church; but the most striking evidence of the intercourse was the finding of an Anglo-Irish coin of the time of Edward I. (1272-1307), minted at Waterford, in the thirteenth century Church Chest of Bosham.

In foreign missions the Keltic Church was just as active as in the home countries. St. Fridolin, in 511, went to France, founding churches at Strasburg, Coire in the Grisons, and Sickingen near Basle; Columbanus went to the Burgundians and the Alsacians; Gall to Germany, Switzerland, and North Italy; Kilian to Thuringia, and Virgilius to Carinthia. These are the names of but a few who led bands of their countrymen to the evangelisation of tribes which would naturally be supposed to have had their spiritual needs ministered to by the nearer and more influential metropolis of the West.

The appreciation of the character of these Irish evangelists may be the better understood by their election to distant foreign sees. St. Mansuetus to Toul in France, Cataldus to the see of Taranto and Donatus to Lupiæ in South Italy, and another Donatus to the bishopric of Fiesole in North Italy.



Sulpicius Severus tells us that in the year 380 certain Priscillianist bishops were banished from Spain and came to the Scilly Isles (*Hist. Sac. ii*, 51). Here they probably came in contact with the British bishops, who heard of their trials and were fired with the wish to preach the faith to the people of Spain. When the Council of Lugo was held in 596 a British see in Gallicia, in north-west Spain, under Bishop Madoc, was an established fact; and a Briton, named Mailoc, was suffragan to Martin, Archbishop of Braga in 572, when he subscribed to the canons of the Second Council of Braga.

The British form of Tonsure prevailed in Gallicia, and to obtain uniformity in this detail the Council of Toledo abolished it in 633, the British bishop Metopius conforming to the ruling and subscribing to the canon.

The British bishops of Bretona signed the decrees passed by the Councils of Toledo in 646, 653, 683, and 693; and of Braga in 675. The see was united with the bishopric of Oviedo in 830.

This connection with Spain led to the incorporation of various features of the Mozarabic Liturgy into the Brito-Irish Books of Deer, Dimma, Mulling and the Stowe Missal; it may also have had an influence in making the pilgrimage to Compostella the favourite objective of mediæval Englishmen.

## CHAPTER XII.

### THE BRITONS ORTHODOX.

**H**ITHERTO all references to the British Church have witnessed to its orthodoxy; but after the earlier testimony of Hilary in 358 and Athanasius in 363, Gildas affirms that Arianism greatly injured it. Subscribing to the early councils is, in itself, proof that the British bishops held the faith of the Catholic Church, and further confirmation on this point is not wanting. Writing in 367 St. Chrysostom speaks of the British Isles as possessing churches and altars; and in another passage he says that in Britain "men may be heard discussing the truths of the Gospel, spoken indeed in another language but not other in meaning" (*Cont. Judaeos, Ep. ii. ad Cor. xii., Hom. xxviii*). And St. Jerome asserts that the British were worshipping the same Christ and observing the same rule of faith as other nations (*Ep. ad Evangel., i.*).

Even Pelagius apparently held no heretical views before he left Britain; but when he was preaching his heresy in Rome and the East a disciple of his, named Agricola, a bishop, came to Britain to spread his doctrines.

Bede, on the authority of Constantius of Lyons, who wrote a Life of Germanus, describes the steps taken to refute this error.—

"Agricola, the son of Severianus, a Pelagian bishop,

had corrupted the faith of the Britons with its foul taint. But whereas they absolutely refused to embrace that perverse doctrine and blaspheme the grace of Christ, yet as they were not able of themselves to confute the subtlety of the argument, they bethought them of wholesome counsels and determined to crave aid of the Gallican prelates in that spiritual warfare.

"Hereupon, these assembled a great synod and consulted together to determine what persons should be sent hither to sustain the faith, and by unanimous consent, choice was made of the apostolic prelates Germain, bishop of Auxerre, and Lupus of Troyes, to go into Britain to confirm the people's faith in the grace of God.

"With ready zeal they complied with the request and commands of the Holy Church, and put to sea." They encountered a great storm, but eventually "they reached the quiet of the desired shore. A multitude flocked thither from all parts and received the bishops." This was in the year 429.

"The bishops speedily filled the island of Britain with the fame of their preaching and miracles; and the Word of God was daily preached by them, not only in the churches, but even in the streets and fields, so that the faithful and Catholic were everywhere confirmed, and those who had been perverted accepted the way of amendment. Like the Apostles, they acquired honour and authority through a good conscience, learning through the study of letters, and the power of working miracles through their merits.

"Thus the whole country readily came over to their way of thinking; the authors of the erroneous belief kept themselves in hiding, and, like evil spirits, grieved for loss of the people that were rescued from them. At

length, after long deliberation, they had the boldness to enter the lists. They came forward in all the splendour of their wealth, with gorgeous apparel, and supported by a numerous following; choosing rather to hazard the contest than to undergo the reproach of being silenced among the people whom they had led astray, lest they, by saying nothing, should seem to condemn themselves.

“An immense multitude had been attracted thither with their wives and children; the people were present as spectators and judges. The two parties stood there in very different case; on the one side was Divine faith and on the other human presumption; on the one side piety, on the other pride; on the one side Pelagius, the founder of their faith, on the other, Christ.

“The blessed bishops permitted their adversaries to speak first, and their empty speech long took up the time and filled the ears with meaningless words. Then the venerable prelates poured forth the torrent of their eloquence and showered upon them the words of Apostles and Evangelists, mingling the Scriptures with their own discourse and supporting their strongest assertions by the testimony of the written Word. Vainglory was vanquished and unbelief refuted; and the heretics, at every argument put before them, not being able to reply, confessed their errors. The people, giving judgment, could scarce refrain from violence, and signified their verdict by their acclamations.” (Bede, *Hist. Eccl. Bk. I. c. xvii*).

“This damnable heresy being thus suppressed, and the authors thereof confuted, and all the people settled in the purity of the faith, the bishops went to the tomb of the martyr, the blessed Alban, to give thanks to God through him. There Germain, having with him relics

of all the Apostles and of divers martyrs, after offering up his prayers, commanded the tomb to be opened, that he might lay therein the precious gifts; judging it fitting that the limbs of saints, brought together from divers countries, as their equal merits had procured them admission into heaven, should find shelter in one tomb. These being honourably bestowed and laid together, he took up a handful of dust from the place where the blessed martyr's blood had been shed, to carry away with him" (Ibid, c. 18).

Returning from St. Albans, Germain had a fall and bruised his foot, which detained the missionaries in Britain; and the Britons at that time being menaced by the Picts, they implored the holy men for their help. This was willingly given, but in an unexpected way. Germain chose a valley with many an echo as the battle ground, and on his instructions, at the approach of the enemy, the Britons together shouted "Alleluia," which was repeated by the echo to such a body of sound that it affrighted the enemy, who fled. This was a victory of spiritual arms, which strengthened the Britons in the faith. The story may be read at length in the pages of Bede, while Maes y Garmon—"The Field of Germain," near Mold, in Flintshire, commemorates the Alleluia Victory to this day, nearly fifteen centuries after the event.

Sixteen years later the Pelagians again became active, and the Britons again called on Germain, who at once came to their help with Severus of Treves as his companion. They restored the faith and obtained the condemnation and banishment of the heretics by the local chieftain in 447.

Such spiritual assistance made the name of Germain



beloved by the British Church and churches were named in his honour. The site of one is within the walls of the old Roman city of Verulam, ground which the saint most likely trod when he visited the tomb of St. Alban. In Cornwall there is St. Germain's Creek, and it is quite possible that it takes his name from his landing there on one of his missions; the town and the church are dedicated in his honour. The same is found in Devon, near Oakhampton, where his name is enshrined in the village of Germans-week and the church dedicated to him. In Wales there are numerous "Garmon" churches, and dedications to him are found on ancient sites in other parts of England.

Writing in 437, Prosper, in his *Liber contra Collatorem* (against the Collations of Cassian) says that "with no less care did he (Pope Celestine) free the British Isles from that same disease (Pelagianism) . . . and by ordaining a bishop for the Scots, whilst he endeavoured to keep the Roman island Catholic, he made also the barbarous island Christian."

Gildas, writing about 547, does not mention Pelagianism; but in Pope John's letter to the Irish in 640, he admonished them to guard against the Pelagian heresy, and reject it, for he had been informed that it was again springing up among them (Bede, *II. xix.*).

The eighth century Irish canons quote from the writings of Pelagius, and his commentary on the Epistles is contained in the Book of Armagh; but so it is in Jerome's writings, and it in no way proves that they held erroneous doctrines; it is quoted in order to dispute his theories, as may be seen in the Irish MS. at Würzburg, which only increases our admiration for the learning of the Irish, who were probably interested in arguing with the able scholars



of their Mother Church of Britain, against the doctrine of their own countryman Coelestius, who had opposed the greatest Fathers of the Church.

Except for the temporary taint of Pelagianism which was extirpated by the ministry of St. Germain, the British Christians held the true faith; differing only from the Latin Church in non-essentials, which, however, were magnified to undue proportions because the British would not submit to the innovation of St. Augustine's claim for jurisdiction over them.

On the strength of certain inscriptions cut on memorial stones of the sixth and seventh centuries, two learned professors—one a Welshman the other a German—have in recent years thought that they perceived doctrinal cause for the gulf between the British and the Latins, impugning the orthodoxy of the Britons.

It is said that the formula found on some of these old British monuments embodies heresy:—*In nomine Dei Patris et Fili Spiritus Sancti*, "In the name of God the Father and of the Son of the Holy Spirit" and another:—*In nomine Dei Summi*, "In the name of the Most High God."

These two passages, the professors assert, explain why Bede rejected the baptism of the British, and Aldhelm denied that they held the regular Catholic faith. But Bede does not reject their baptism, and Aldhelm's objection was based on their non-submittal to Rome (see p. 156).

The leaving out of *et* before "of the Holy Spirit" in the inscriptions is in no way a denial of the Blessed Trinity; it conforms neither to the Ebionite or Sabellian confusion of the three Persons of the Trinity; and there is no ground for saying that the Britons did not invoke

the Triune God in baptism; everything proves that they did invoke the Holy Trinity in all things.

In the seventh century Life of St. Patrick, by Muirchu maccu Machtheni, we read that Patrick embarked for Ireland "in the name of the Holy Trinity," and that he baptised "in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost."

A very much later criticism accused St. Columba (who died in 597) of not expounding the true faith in the Holy Trinity in his hymn *Altus Prosator Vetustus* (Bernard and Atkinson, *The Irish Liber Hymnorum*, i. 64, ii-25)—A charge which can only be received as a modern perversion of words uttered by the stalwart champion of the faith at Iona.

The least expected testimonial to British orthodoxy comes from St. Wilfrid, who so strenuously opposed the Keltic observance of Easter. In a meeting of a hundred and twenty-five bishops in Rome in 680, gathered to discuss the preliminaries in anticipation of a General Council at Constantinople, Wilfrid declared that the true Catholic faith was held by the Irish, Scottish, British and Anglo-Saxon Churches. (Eddius, *Vit. Wilfrid*, 51).

## CHAPTER CXIII.

### THE ANGLO-SAXONS.

THE virile youth of Britain had already been taken to fight in Gaul when the Roman army was finally withdrawn from this land in the year 409; leaving the enfeebled Britons to face the inroads of the Picts from the North and the Scots from Ireland. In vain they cried for help from the Romans on whom they had become dependant; their only answer was the withdrawal of the law forbidding them weapons, so they turned for support to the tribes of the opposite continent, and invited the Jutes to assist them with warriors.

Those sturdy viking people were ever ready to become mercenaries with the prospect of loot, and the first invited Jutes landed about the year 450. They were settled by the British king Vortigern in Thanet, where they, as guests, possibly refrained from pillage or the destruction of churches; and in this way the church of St. Martin, near Canterbury, may have been spared.

When, however, they did not get all they wanted they proceeded to help themselves from those whom they were supposed to help, and, with successive bands of immigrants, they overran Britain with vindictive barbarity. They did not conquer and amalgamate with the natives but obtained the country for themselves only by massacring or enslaving the conquered.

The church was no more spared than the homestead, indeed, the invaders were more inimical to those of a religion opposed to their gods than they might have been to an indifferent peasantry. Priests were slain and churches destroyed, with that intensity which usually accompanies religious strife.

The dates of the landing of the various troops of marauders are not the same in the records of the different chroniclers, but approximately they came to Kent in 450-473, to Sussex in 477-490, to Wessex in 495-520; when their defeat at the battle of Mons Badonicus stopped their progress in that part of the country for fifty years; before 519 they were in East Anglia, and Verulam, or St. Albans, was taken by them in 527; they came to Northumbria in 547, and penetrated to the River Severn in 577-584; from Northumbria they proceeded to Chester in 613, and they reached to Offa's Dyke in 784. The small, and now isolated group of Britons of Elmet, in the neighbourhood of Leeds, were driven out in 616.

In the accounts of Saxon barbarity and the destruction of British churches we are given a proof of the extent of Christianity and the grip it had on the British people, which must have been more extensive than is generally considered. This is seen in the lament of Gildas:—"All the columns were levelled with the ground by the application of the battering-ram, all the husbandmen were routed, together with their bishops, priests and people, while the sword gleamed and the flames crackled around on all sides. Lamentable to behold, in the midst of the streets lay the tops of lofty towers tumbled to the ground, stones of high walls, holy altars, fragments of human bodies covered with livid clots of congealed blood, looking as if they had been squeezed together in a press, and

with no chance of burial save in the ruins of the houses or in the ravening bellies of wild beasts and birds.

“Some of the miserable remnant being taken in the mountains were murdered in great numbers; others, constrained by famine, came and yielded themselves to be slaves for ever to their foes, running the risk of instant death, which truly was the greatest favour that could be given them” (*History* § 24, 25). In Layamon’s *Brut* it is said that they (the Saxons) “laid the learned men (the priests) on embers . . . the churches they consumed.”

Geoffrey of Monmouth, in the twelfth century, recording the persecution of the Church, says:—“This odious people whom that detestable traitor (Vortigern) invited over has expelled the nobility, laid waste a fruitful country, destroyed the holy churches and almost extinguished Christianity over the whole kingdom” (*Hist. Brit. III. ii*). “The remainder of the Britons retired into the western parts of the kingdom, that is Cornwall and Wales. The three Archbishops, namely, the Archbishop of Legions (or Caerleon), Theonus of London, Thadicus of York, when they beheld all the churches in their jurisdiction lying level with the ground, fled with all their clergy that remained after so great a destruction, to the coverts of the woods in Wales, carrying with them the relics of the saints for fear that the sacred bones of so many holy men of old might be destroyed by the barbarians” (*Ibid. II. x*).

Henry of Huntingdon records, under the year 450, that “When the Anglo-Saxons broke their treaty with Vortigern they ravaged the land, the conflagration extended from the eastern to the western sea, there being none to oppose it, and spread over almost the whole face

of the devoted island. Public and private buildings were levelled to the ground; the priests were everywhere slain before the altars; the prelates and the people, with no respect of persons, were destroyed with fire and sword; nor were there any to bury those who were thus cruelly slaughtered. Some who were taken in the mountains were instantly butchered; some, exhausted by famine, delivered themselves up to the enemy, willing to undergo perpetual slavery in return for food, if they escaped instant death. Some, with grief, sought refuge beyond the sea (in Brittany); others, cleaving to their native country, prolonged a wretched existence among the mountains, the woods, and inaccessible cliffs, in dire want and continual fear for their lives."

In the opinion of Matthew of Westminster "the churches that were burned had the happier fate. In thirty cases churches were saved and made into heathen temples and the altars polluted with pagan sacrifices"; but he does not mention which were the churches spared. He also says that Theonus, the British bishop of London, kept in his diocese as long as possible. London was difficult for the enemy to take as it was girt with marshes; but at length, in 586, the bishop fled to Wales, taking with him the relics of the saints and such of the ordained clerics as had survived the perils. Others fled to the continental Britain, and Thadicus of York left for Wales about the same time.

"At this time the church of the blessed Alban, the first of the British Martyrs, which is described by Bede in his history of the English, to have been wonderfully constructed of stone after the passion of the martyr, was utterly destroyed with the other churches of the country" (Wendover, *Flowers of History*, under A.D. 793).



While Geoffrey's romance may not generally be reliable, and the names of the numerous prelates which he records as living in the time of Aurelius Ambrosius receive no support, he must have heard some tradition on which to base his characters; but certain other statements of his may, with reserve, be received as they are partially verified from other sources. He is here quoted in a description of the restoration of some of the churches when Aurelius had temporally rebuffed the Saxons. Aurelius is said to have undertaken the rebuilding of the church at York and other sanctuaries of that province; to have restored the church of St. Amphibalus at Winchester, and the monastery of Ambresbury, near Salisbury, where one of the three Perpetual Choirs of the British Church was established, and which Geoffrey says maintained three hundred monks (*VIII. ix*). He also describes how the bishops, abbots, and all the clergy of the province solemnised the funeral of Aurelius at Winchester (*VIII. xv*).

Uther Pendragon became the leader of the British and he is reported to have followed the sayings of the mythical Merlin and ordered that two dragons be made of gold, one of which he gave to the church of Winchester. Legend says that King Arthur again restored York:—"On entering the city he beheld with grief the desolation of the churches, for, on the expulsion of the holy Archbishop Sanzo (a prelate utterly unknown) and of all the clergy there, the temples, which were half burned down, no longer had divine service celebrated in them, so fiercely had the impious rage of the pagans prevailed. . . . He rebuilt the churches that lay level with the ground, and—that which was their chief ornament—saw them filled with assemblies of devout persons of both sexes" (*Ibid. IX. viii*).

Other evidence proving the great number of churches which were once spread over that part of Britain now known as "England" is gathered from the pen of a Saxon writer.

After the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons, Eddi, the biographer of St. Wilfrid, who died in 709, says that Wilfrid strove to recover the holy places of the British Church; and that where he found mean structures of wood and thatch he left noble buildings of stone with lead roofs and wondrous vaults.

After the Saxon irruption three groups of Britons were left in Britain—in Damnonia (Devon and Cornwall), Wales, and Strathclyde (South of the Clyde and Cumbria); another branch of them was in Armorica (Brittany).

The flight of British bishops, clergy and laity to the West necessitated the reorganisation of the Church in Wales which, in the seventh century was arranged by the constitution of episcopal sees based on the chief monasteries.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### BRITISH MARTYRS.

THE vitality of a Church is seen in its witnesses for the faith, in its martyrs and confessors, according to the prevalent conditions. Well was it said by Tertullian that "The blood of martyrs is the seed of the Church," and, considering the sparseness of population and the geographical position, Britain equalled the central Roman Empire in a proportionate number of witnesses.

British Christians were confronted by the heathen of their own land, by the Roman pagans who for a period dominated Britain, and by the ruthless hordes of Anglo-Saxons, Danes and Norsemen.

Unlike the cultured races of Italy and the near East, the Britons of that time had no historians to record the progress of the missionaries or the sufferings of martyrs. The memory of these things depended on oral traditions, which were marvellously well preserved, although the original facts sometimes became surrounded by an accretion of fable before they were committed to writing. Neither would oral tradition account for more than the most notable of such events.

Notwithstanding this difficulty a number of names of British martyrs are preserved. The passion of Sts. Aristobulus, Alban, Amphibalus, Julius, Aaron and others have already been noticed, and Bede says that

“many more of both sexes in divers places, who, after they had endured various tortures, and their limbs had been mangled after an unheard of manner, yielded their souls to heavenly joys” in the time of Diocletian.

The Anglian Martyrologies say that over one thousand Christians suffered death at Lichfield in the Diocletian persecution, and that this gave the name to the present city. Lichfield, or Lyke-field, means the “Field of the



FIG. 30. SEAL OF LICHFIELD.

Dead,” and one spot still retains the appellation of “The Christian Field.” These martyrs are commemorated in the Corporation Seal of Lichfield, on which is depicted a field strewn with dead bodies.

Merthyr is the old British word for “Martyr,” and this is a prefix to some of the place-names in Wales, indicating

the spot on which a certain martyr suffered, which was covered by an oratory and was the site of the present church. Such examples are at Merthyr-Tydvil, or Tudvyl, a daughter of Prince Brychan, who was martyred here about 460, and who is still the patron of the parish church. Cynog, or Canog ab Brychan, was murdered by Saxons in a piratical incursion in 492 at Merthyr-Cynog, in County Brecknock; and Giraldus Cambrensis says that the torque, or metal collar, given to Cynog by his royal father, was preserved there in the twelfth century. Several churches in Wales are dedicated to him. There is also *Merther* in Cornwall which commemorates St. Cohan.

Merthyr-Dyfan, or Dovan, was a Briton whose pedigree is extant; he is associated with the name of King Lucius in spreading the Gospel through Wales, and as visiting Glastonbury. He was martyred on the spot where his church stands in Glamorganshire, under the Latinised form of St. Deruvianus. And the martyrdom of St. Mawrs, a much travelled missionary, is kept alive to memory in Merthyr Mawr in the same county.

Others who swelled the army of martyrs and whose names are known, include Angulus, a bishop in London, but not named among the diocesans; Fingar and his sister Piala, who were seized in Ireland and brought to Cornwall to meet their death about the year 450.

Odran, the chariot driver to St. Patrick, overheard Failge, an Irish chieftain, plotting to vent his wrath on the saint for teaching Christianity to his tribe, and he determined to save his master. He somehow persuaded St. Patrick to take the reins whilst he took his ease in the chariot. Failge rushed from cover by the roadside and slew the inmate of the car, but it was not St. Patrick, Odran had given his own life for him.



Giraldus Cambrensis says that there were no martyrs in Ireland (*Topography of Ireland*, xxxii); but here is Odran for one; and St. Patrick says that after he had baptised and confirmed people "in numbers" they were martyred whilst the chrism was still fresh on their foreheads (*Epistle to Coroticus*). There was also near Ard-Machæ, or Armagh, *Fertæ Martyrum*, as it is termed in the Book of Armagh, the Martyrs' Mound, or grave; and in County Cork, Kilnamartry, the Church of Martyrs, which witness to yet others, unnamed, who gave their lives for the faith.

At Talgarth, near Brecknock, St. Given was martyred about 492; Tybie, a virgin of the family of Brychan, was slain by the heathen on a spot now occupied by the church of Llandybie, and her holy well is close at hand. Nectan, a bishop, lived at Hartland Point in North Devonshire, where he was martyred, and his name is commemorated at Tintagel, and in a chapel in the parish of St. Winnow, Cornwall. All these received the celestial crown in the fifth century.

Geraint, or as Latinised, Gerontius, a chieftain in Devonshire, had a prolonged struggle against the encroachments of the Saxons, by whom he was slain in 522. There was a chapel to him at Pilleigh, in Cornwall, and his burial mound is on Carn Beacon, or Veryan. He is commemorated in a *Mabinoge* and in Tennyson's *Idylls of the King*.

Melor, the son of a Cornish prince, was martyred about 538 at St. Mylor, Cornwall, and he is said to have been buried in the burial ground of the monastery at Ambresbury, in Wiltshire. The churches of Linkinhorne, Cornwall, and Thornbury, Dorsetshire, are dedicated to him.

This saint, Melor, is sometimes confused with his



father Melyan after whom the churches of St. Mellion and Mullion are named.

St. Justin, or Stinan, a hermit on the Isle of Ramsey, off Pembrokeshire, and a friend of St. David, was martyred because he reproved the vices of the Welsh, about 540. He was buried at Llaniestyn, Anglesea, where there is an effigy of him in shallow relief, which is probably of the fourteenth century.

Aldate, or Eldad, a son of King Geraint, was trained in the school of St. Illtyd and became bishop of Caer Loew, or Gloucester. In 577 the Saxons reduced the city and martyred the bishop. His memory is preserved in a church of Oxford. The date 490 is assigned to St. Aldate on the episcopal throne in Gloucester Cathedral.

Llandyfeisant in Pembrokeshire, Llandyffei in Carmarthenshire, and the church of Foy in Herefordshire, commemorate St. Tyfei, a boy martyr of the early part of the sixth century.

St. Constantine, son of King Padarn of Cornwall, was a monk who travelled to the North to visit Sts. Columba and Kentigern at Glasgow. He went on a mission to Kintyre and was martyred by the Picts. He is regarded as the first martyr of Scotland.

There was a virgin martyr in Cornwall, St. Columbe, of whom nothing is known except that she was killed by a pagan chieftain on the site of the church of St. Columbe Major; she was also invoked at St. Columbe Minor. In the charter of the local fair it is called the "Fair of St. Columbe, Virgin and Martyr, which is appointed to be held on the first Thursday after November 13, and her feast day is the following Sunday."

St. Domnan, or Donan, was an Irish abbot who took boat with fifty-two disciples to visit St. Columba at Iona

on their way to penetrate unknown Pictlands for the conversion of the people. They settled on the island of Ewe, or Eigg, in Loch Ewe, on the north-western coast of Ross-shire, where they were murdered by Vikings.

A British virgin, Sidwell, or Sativola, sister to Paulus Aurelianus, was martyred at Exeter in the seventh century. A church is dedicated to her and another to her brother Paulus Exeter; and a well, holy to St. Sidwell, is at Llaneast in Cornwall.

The various names of Dagan, Degeman and Decuman apply to a hermit who lived in a wattled hut which he built near Dunster, Somerset, where he was martyred by the Saxons about the year 706.

The British Cynbryd, of royal blood, founded the church of Llanddulas, Denbighshire; and walking one day in the neighbourhood he was ambushed by some of his pagan subjects and slain at a place since called Bwlch Cynbryd, or Cynbryd's Pass.

Maelrubh, Maelruth, and of many other spellings, was an Irish prince, born in 642. He entered the monastery, of St. Comgal at Bangor, Ireland, and when he was twenty-nine years of age he crossed to Scotland, travelling to Mearns in the north, and founded the monastery of Apurcrossan, on the island of Maree, in Loch Maree, over which he presided for fifty-one years. Here the old man of eighty was killed by the Norsemen in 722. A wooden church was built over the spot on which he fell, and there are a few fragments of stones and crosses remaining on the site of his monastery.

A chieftain named Cledog, Clydog, or Clintanc was murdered by the heathen at a place in Herefordshire, which is still known as Clodock.

St. Adrian, bishop of Kilrymont (The Church of the

Kings Mount), afterwards known as St. Andrews, in Scotland, with a companion named Clodian, ministered among the Picts. They were on the Isle of May when it was raided by Danish pirates, who put them to death about the year 870.

With patient research the names of many other British martyrs could be added to this short list; but even these are enough to show that the Keltic Church was full of vitality and zealous expansion. In addition to individual martyrdoms there were the wholesale slaughterings of Christians by the Anglo-Saxons and then by the Danes, when unknown numbers were added to the noble Army of Martyrs whose names find record only in the archives of Heaven.

No mass martyrdom exceeds in brutality that of the monks of Bangor, when Ethelfrid, the Angle king of Northumbria, "ravaged the Britons more than all the chiefs of the English."

The two forces, British and Angles, eventually met near Chester, and Ethelfrid observing a great number of priests with the British army "who, standing apart in a place of more safety, were come together to offer up their prayers to God for the soldiers; he inquired who they were, or why they had come together in that place. Most of them were of the monastery of Bangor, in which it is reported, there was so great a number of monks that the monastery, being divided into seven parts, with a ruler over each, none of those parts contained less than three hundred men, who all lived by the labour of their hands. Many of these, having fasted three days, resorted among others to pray at the aforesaid battle. King Ethelfrid, being informed of the occasion of their coming, said:—"If then they cry to their God against us, in truth, though

they do not bear arms, yet they fight against us because they oppose us by their prayers.' He therefore commanded that they should first be attacked. About twelve hundred that came to pray are said to have been killed, and only fifty to have escaped by flight" (Bede, *Eccl. Hist. Bk. II. c. ii.*). The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle gives the date A.D. 607 for this terrible occurrence.

A massacre of Keltic Christians was made by the pagan Danes on the island of Iona in 797, when thirty-eight met their death; and again in 801, when nearly eighty monks were martyred. Britain, Ireland and Scotland were all subjected to the anti-Christian ferocity of the Norwegians and Danes, beneath whose weapons untold numbers died; yet it did not attain to the extent of annihilation as was the case under the Anglo-Saxons.

## CHAPTER XV.

### DEDICATIONS.

**T**HE name of a church in ancient Britain was not the name of a patron saint as in the Latin or present sense, neither is the prefix "Saint" to be taken as it is now understood.

At first a church was known under the name of its founder, as Llanddewi—The Church of David—and offshoots of that church usually carried the name of the original founder of the mother church. The Dewi and Teilo churches are found grouped in districts which embrace the central spheres of work of St. David and St. Teilo. Some were at a greater distance but still they were the property of the Tribe of the Saint of the chief church; thus it is that since the organisation of definite dioceses, a church in one bishopric may belong to the bishop of another diocese, it is a "peculiar" of the mother house. Similarly "Llansaint" is the Church of the Saint, although the name of the founder may be lost.

The term "Saint" came about by no canonization, but was applied to founders of churches; and when there is documentary evidence, first seen in the ninth century Stowe Missal, it is found that the Keltic Church placed the names of its holy men in the Canon of the Mass and in the Litany, which was a close following of the early Church in

Rome, Africa and the East, where the names to be commemorated were written in the diptychs.

"Llan" was the ancient British name for an enclosure and it was adopted by the Christians for the church enclosure. It is prefixed to more than four hundred Welsh churches, and the numerous parishes in England beginning with "Lan" are likely sites of British churches before the Saxons destroyed the works of the conquered. This is especially the case where Roman remains are found, as at Lanercost in Cumberland, Lanchester in Durham, Lancing in Sussex, etc., and in Cornwall and Devon where the second "l" has dropped out.

"Eglwys" is a later prefix derived from "Ecclesia," or in Cornwall "Eglos," as Egloshayle, and was applied to a chief church, a sort of Chapel Royal and the church of a dignitary, as Eglwys Cymmyn, the Church of Cynin, a chorepiscopus of the fifth century.

Under the influence of Latin Christianity many of the older British names were swept away and the churches dedicated to other saints.

As in the cradle of the infant Church martyries were built over the graves of martyrs so in the British Church, as above noticed. In this way certain churches of a secondary period were not known by the first builders of them but by the names of the martyrs which inspired the founding of a church.

One of the earliest dedications to a saint other than the founder was to St. Michael. The Archangel was looked to by the British as the victor over the devil even before the notable dedication of his church on Mount Gargano in 493 brought St. Michael into prominent popularity.

It is said that St. Michael's dedications began in the



eighth century, but he was certainly invoked as a patron before that period. The mistake may have arisen from a statement in the *Brut y Tywysog* under the year 717—"The Church of St. Michael was consecrated," which was referring to one special church, probably that in Mounts Bay, Cornwall.

The deliverance of the British from the heresy of Pelagius by St. German, and his no less impressive "Alleluia Victory" over the Picts near Mold, Flintshire, awoke a grateful remembrance of him, and churches enshrined his name at Verulam, in Cornwall, and in the "Garmon" churches of Wales. There are three in Lincolnshire, and a few others elsewhere in England. His companion, St. Lupus, is commemorated in Llan-Bleidian, or Llanblethian, in Glamorganshire, the church being dedicated to St. Bleddian, the Welsh form for Lupus.

Traces of the Keltic Church may be followed by the names of its saints as they pursued their missions to the pagans through the Picts' land to Northumbria and Yorkshire, and thence spread with enfeebled force into Mercia, Lincoln and Essex. This influence is still seen in the church of St. Patrick at Lambley in Northumberland, St. Brandon in the same county, St. Kentigern (or Mungo) at Simonburn, Chadwell in Essex, etc.

Dedications in Saxon England to the Apostle St. Paul alone are very rare, and many of the ancient churches under this dedication are abbreviations of Paulinus. When these occur in the districts reached by the Canterbury Mission they are in honour of St. Augustine's fellow worker; but outside that sphere they commemorate Pawl Hen, the instructor of St. David, or when in Cornwall and Devon it is the name of the British Paul who became bishop of Leon in Brittany.

The native tradition that St. Helen was British-born, together with the knowledge that she was the mother of Constantine for whom the British had a special regard, led to her commemoration after the finding of the Holy Sepulchre and before the withdrawal of the Roman troops. Many churches are found to be dedicated to her over the British area, on British sites in England, even in London, and in the path of the Scotie Church in the north of England.

Under Latin influence, churches dedicated to *Mair*, or Mary, became numerous in Wales in the tenth century, and later, when the Normans made themselves felt in that part of the land. Professor Rees traces the earliest known example to a church at Bangor, dedicated in 973. Very few dedications to St. Mary are found which can be looked upon as purely British; but there is an exception at Glastonbury, which was dedicated to the "Holy Mother of God," and if it were St. Joseph of Arimathæa who first erected that wattle church, this is easily understood. St. Joseph had seen the grief of the Mother at the Cross, had heard the Saviour's words to her and his commendation of her to St. John, and he memorialized her in the church which he founded. Even at Lastingham no name is recorded at its foundation by St. Cedd, and when that church was rebuilt of stone between the years 669—735, and dedicated to the "Mother of God," it may have been through the growing influence of Latin customs.

By degrees churches received the names of saints as memorials to them, like those of St. Martin at Whit-horn, Canterbury, and at Ludgate in London, but all of these were influenced by the Gallican Church; or others like St. Amphibalus at Winchester which more nearly conformed to the Latin rite. Possibly this innovation in

Britain was made when news reached this land of Constantine's remarkable dedications of the churches at Jerusalem, at Tyre, and those of St. Peter and St. Paul in Rome.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### ANTAGONISM BETWEEN THE BRITON AND SAXON.

THE eastern part of Christian Britain was now pagan England. The marriage of Ethelbert of Kent with Bertha brought a bishop again into that part of the land, and Luidard was a chaplain bishop ministering to the queen's household at St. Martin's Church outside Canterbury, and providing the only oasis in the pagan desert.

At this time, Gregory, one of the seven deacons of Rome, a man well versed in world-wide conditions, greatly wished to bring the English to a knowledge of Christ. The state of England was also known at Alexandria, as in one of Gregory's letters (viii. 30) to the Patriarch Eulogius he says that the pleading of Eulogius had several times moved him to attempt the conversion of the English.

Gregory wrote to the Frankish kings—Theodoric and Theodebert—and to Queen Brunehild, that he heard that the English people earnestly desired to become Christians, and that applications had been made to the neighbouring bishops, but no efforts were forthcoming in response to the appeal (Ep. vi. 58, 59). No doubt it was Luidard who vainly appealed for help from the Gallican bishops.

It was about the year 585 that Gregory was passing

through the slave market of Rome and saw some fair Angle boys from Yorkshire for sale. He went to Pope Pelagius II. and suggested that he should be sent to England; he was not, however, allowed to leave Rome. But when he became pope in 590, Gregory began to put his wish into effect; he first ordered his priest Candidus, at Marseilles, to buy English boys of seventeen or eighteen years of age, who might be trained as missionaries for England; but this scheme would take too long to develop, so he sent the prior Augustine, with about forty companions, to carry out his long-cherished wish.

Augustine landed in Thanet, Kent, in 597, and after he had established his mission at Canterbury, he went to Arles and was there consecrated as "Archbishop of the English." He then sent to Gregory for his advice on certain points, among which was one question dealing with the old British Church. He asked:—"How are we to deal with the bishops of Britain?"

Gregory's answer was:—"As for all the bishops of Britain, we commit them to your care, that the unlearned may be taught, the weak strengthened by persuasion, and the perverse corrected by authority" (Bede, *Hist. Eccl. I. xxvii*).

In the year 601 Augustine received the *pallium*, the emblem of the plenitude of authority, from Gregory, with a letter making subject to him "not only those bishops whom you shall ordain, and those that shall be ordained by the bishop of York, but also *all the prelates in Britain*" (Bede, *I. xxix*).

Gregory also implored Augustine to be humble in his success "lest, amid the wonders that are wrought the weak mind may be puffed up with self-esteem, and that whereby it is outwardly raised to honour cause it inwardly to fall through vain-glory" (*Ibid I. xxxi*).

It will be seen how truly Gregory had read Augustine's character when the archbishop's "vain-glory" led to the alienation of the British bishops.

With the help of King Ethelbert, "Augustine drew together to a conference the bishops and abbots of the nearest province of the Britons at a place which to this day is called in the English language 'Augustine's Ac,' that is 'Augustine's Oak' on the borders of the Hwiccas (a tribe occupying Gloucestershire and Worcestershire) and the West Saxons (identified by Bishop Browne as Cricklade), and he began by brotherly admonitions to persuade them to preserve Catholic peace with him, and to undertake the common labour of preaching the Gospel to the heathen for the Lord's sake. For they did not keep Easter Sunday at the proper time, but from the fourteenth to the twentieth moon; which computation is contained in a cycle of eighty-four years. Besides, they did many other things which were opposed to the unity of the Church. When, after a long disputation, they did not comply with the entreaties, exhortations, or rebukes of Augustine and his companions, but preferred their own traditions before all those of the Church which are united in Christ throughout the world, the holy father, Augustine put an end to this troublesome and tedious contention" (Bede, *Hist. Eccl. II. ii*).

The Britons asked for a second conference. Now the British bishops were a simple people of no ostentation, while Augustine, in the pride of his newly acquired pallium, and embued with the idea of the homage of the minor towards the greater dignitaries, as observed in Rome, required his due as archbishop.

The second meeting being arranged, "there came, it is said, seven bishops of the Britons and many men of



great learning, particularly from their most celebrated monastery, which is called in the English tongue, Brancornaburg (Bangor-is-Coed, Flintshire), over which the Abbot Dinoot is said to have presided at that time. They that were to go to the aforesaid council betook themselves first to a certain holy and discreet man, who used to lead the life of a hermit among them, to consult with him, whether they ought to forsake their traditions at the word of Augustine. 'If he is a man of God follow him,' he replied. 'How shall we know that?' said they. He replied, 'Our Lord saith—Take my yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; if therefore, Augustine is meek and lowly of heart, it is to be believed that he bears the yoke of Christ himself, and offers it to you to bear. But, if he is harsh and proud, it is plain that he is not of God, nor are we to regard his words.' They said again—'And how shall we discern even this?' 'Do you contrive,' said the anchorite, 'that he first arrive with his company at the place where the synod is to be held; and if at your approach he rises up to you, hear him submissively, being assured that he is the servant of Christ; but if he despises you, and does not rise up to you, whereas you are more in number, let him also be despised by you.'

They did as he directed; and it happened that, as they approached, Augustine was sitting on a chair, and did not rise to greet them. When they perceived it they were angry, and charging him with pride, set themselves to contradict all that he said.

He said to them—'Many things ye do which are contrary to our custom, or rather the custom of the universal Church, and yet, if you will comply with me in these three matters, namely, to keep Easter at the due

time; to fulfil the ministry of Baptism, by which we are born again to God, according to the custom of the holy Roman Apostolic Church; and to join with us in preaching the Word of God to the English nation, we will gladly suffer all the other things you do, though contrary to our customs."

They answered that they would do none of those things nor receive him as their archbishop; for they said among themselves "if he would not rise up to us now, how much more will he despise us as of no account if we begin to be under his subjection?"

Then the man of God, Augustine, is said to have threatened them, that if they would not accept peace with their brethren, they should have war with their enemies" (*Ibid*).

This was in the year 603, and that fatal chair, or reputed chair, is preserved. For long centuries it was in the church of Stanford Bishop, Hertfordshire, and is now in the museum at Canterbury. It is of oak, still bearing the marks of the adze, and corresponds in style with a Roman *solium*, a professor's chair or seat of honour.

Laurence, who succeeded to the archbishopric of Canterbury, in 605, addressed a letter to the Irish:—

*"To our most dear brethren, the Lords Bishops and Abbots throughout all the country of the Scots (Irish), Laurentius, Mellitus, and Justus, Bishops, servants of the servants of God. When the Apostolic see, according to the universal custom which it has followed elsewhere, sent us to these western parts to preach to pagan nations, and it was our lot to come into this island, which is called Britain, before we knew them we held both the Britons and Scots in great esteem for sanctity, believing that they walked according to the custom of the universal*

Church; but, becoming acquainted with the Britons we thought that the Scots had been better. Now we have learnt from Bishop Dagan (of Inver Daeile, co. Wicklow), who came into this aforesaid island, and the Abbot Columban, in Gaul, that the Scots in no way differ from the Britons in their ways; for when Bishop Dagan came to us, not only did he refuse to eat at the same table, but even to eat in the same house where we were entertained."

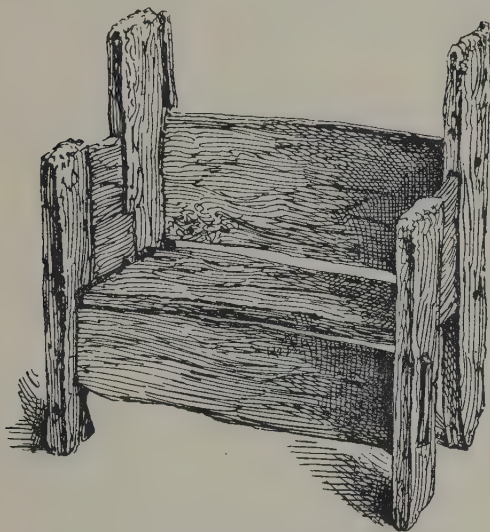


FIG. 31. REPUTED CHAIR OF ST. AUGUSTINE.  
CANTERBURY MUSEUM.

"Also Laurence with his fellow bishops wrote a letter to the bishops of the Britons, suitable to his degree, by which he endeavoured to confirm them in Catholic unity; but what he gained by so doing the present times will show" (Bede, *Hist. Eccl. II. iv.*).

What Laurence gained through Augustine's mistake is found in a letter of St. Aldhelm to the British King Geraint:—

“The Demetian (south-east Wales) priests on the other side of the Severn Strait, proud of the purity of their own lives, haughtily abominate our company to such a degree that they will not join us in prayer in church, nor in a brotherly way partake of the same dishes at table; nay, they even throw the remains of our meals to dogs and swine. Vessels and glasses that we have used they direct to be scoured and cleansed with sand and ashes. They give us no friendly greeting, no brotherly kiss; they offer us no washing of our hands, no water, no towel, no bath for our feet. And if it happen that any one of our race has for any reason to go and live among them, they do not admit him to their company until he has been compelled to perform penance for forty days”

The real cause of this hostility was Augustine's overbearing attitude towards the British prelates; and their detestation of the Saxon conquerors; nominally it rested on various ecclesiastical observances and customs, which will be noted on page 166.

Neither would the attitude of St. Columbanus towards the Roman See tend to pacify the popes, when he wrote to Boniface IV. lamenting the infamy attaching itself to the Chair of St. Peter in consequence of disputes at Rome. He exhorted the pope to be more vigilant, and to purify the see from errors, as many persons doubted the orthodoxy of the Roman Pontiff, and it would be disastrous if the Catholic faith were not held by the Apostolic See.

St. Aldhelm exposes the hand of the Latins, and gives the key of the position in his efforts to promote unity, in a continuation of his letter to King Geraint:—

“We entreat you on our knees, in view of our future and common country in heaven and of the angels our future fellow-countrymen, do not persevere in your

arrogant contempt of the decrees of St. Peter and the traditions of the Roman Church, by a proud and tyrannical attachment to the decrees of your ancestors. Whatever may be the perfection of faith and good works they are unprofitable out of the Catholic Church. . . To sum up everything in one word, it is vain for any man to take credit to himself for belonging to the Catholic faith so long as he rejects the doctrine and rule of St. Peter. For the foundation of the Church and the consolidation of the faith, placed first in Christ and secondly in St. Peter, will not waver before the assaults of any tempest. It was on St. Peter that the Truth Himself conferred the privilege of the Church, saying, Thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build my Church" (William of Malmesbury, *Letter to Geraint, King of Damnonia, in Life of St. Aldhelm*).

The romancing pen of Geoffrey of Monmouth is clear on this subject when he says:—"When Augustine required the subjection of the British bishops, and would have persuaded them to undertake the work of the Gospel with him among the Angles, they answered him with several arguments—that they owed no subjection to him since they had their own archbishop, neither would they preach to their enemies, because the Saxon nation persisted in depriving them of their country" (*Hist. Brit.* xi. 12). Matthew of Westminster also says that "Those who fled to Wales have never, to this day, ceased their hatred of the Angles."

Apart from the question of supremacy, the points at issue with the Latins are not perfectly clear. Augustine mentioned:—to keep Easter at the due time and fulfil the ministry of baptism. These and other differences are dealt with on pages 166-172.



## CHAPTER XVII.

### THE PROGRESS OF THE KELTS.

WE have already seen on page 151 that St. Augustine landed in Kent in 597, that he baptised King Ethelbert, and went to Arles to receive the episcopate from Vergilius, and that he received the archiepiscopal pallium from Gregory in 601.

Then at the unsuccessful conference with the British bishops at Augustine's Oak, when they refused to co-operate with Augustine, he threatened them that "if they would not preach the way of life to the English nation, they should suffer at their hands the vengeance of death. All which, through the dispensation of the Divine judgment, fell out exactly as he had predicted. For afterwards the warlike King of the English, Ethelfrid, having raised a mighty army, made a very great slaughter of that heretical nation at the city of Legions (Chester)" (Bede, *Hist. Eccl. II. ii.*). This massacre of the monks of Bangor, recounted on page 143, was thus considered by the Roman party a visitation on them for refusing to preach to the Anglo-Saxons.

But it was not that the British refused to preach the Gospel to the English, it was repudiation of Augustine. They carried the Word to the Angles, and the Saxons through perils from which the Augustinian bishops fled, and successfully penetrated regions where the Latins



failed. And now the progress of the Keltic Church amongst the Anglo-Saxons has to be reviewed; and at the same time the failure of the Canterbury mission must, perforce, be followed.

As sole consecrator Augustine made Justus bishop of Rochester, Mellitus bishop of the East Saxons, which embraced Essex and Middlesex with London as his see city, and without the co-operation of other prelates he ordained Laurence to succeed him in the see of Canterbury.

Augustine died in 605 after spreading the Gospel through Kent and converting Sigebert of the East Saxons, to whom he sent Bishop Mellitus, but when that king died in 616 his sons remained heathen, and drove out the bishop. Thus twelve years represented the only period in which the Canterbury clerics attempted to spread the faith in that direction, and the East Saxons were left to their idols.

A recrudescence of paganism in Kent caused Justus of Rochester to join Mellitus in his flight to Gaul, and Archbishop Laurence prepared to follow them when, in a dream, St. Peter so castigated him for his cowardice that he remained.

King Redwald of East Anglia received Baptism in Kent, and he had in the same temple an altar for the Christian Sacrifice and another for heathen sacrifices. This does not say much for the faith instilled in him nor does it commend the Christian priest from Kent who would celebrate Mass in the same temple in which heathen sacrifices were offered. The people of that kingdom, naturally, would not receive baptism.

In 619 Archbishop Laurence died and Mellitus was recalled to fill the bishopric of Canterbury, and when he died in 624, Justus, who had returned to Rochester, came

to Canterbury, and consecrated Romanus to Rochester, but the new prelate was soon afterwards drowned and Rochester left to its own devices.

Meanwhile Sigebert of East Anglia, who had been banished by his step-father Redwald, had received baptism in Gaul, and he returned after the death of King Eorpwald to rule the kingdom. He brought with him Bishop Felix of Burgundy, an Irishman, possibly from one of the Keltic foundations in Gaul, who made Dunwich his seat and founded a school.

There came also into East Anglia an Irish monk, named Fursa, or Fursey, who had such a following in Ireland that he literally fled from them to the contemplative life he desired. With his brothers Fullan (a bishop) and Ultan, his priests Gobban and Dicull, and a few monks, Fursey passed through Britain to try and find isolation among the pagans of Anglia; he was given the Roman fort of Burgheastle in Suffolk, the walls of which are still standing (Fig. 32). and within that stronghold he founded a monastery. His preaching, example and influence converted many to Christ; but when an irruption of pagan Mercians destroyed that quiet, he crossed to Gaul and founded a monastery at Lagny on the Marne, near Paris.

We must turn again to Northumbria, where Edwin, now king, wished to marry the Christian Ethelberga of Kent. He was a heathen, so Paulinus was consecrated a bishop in 625 to accompany the bride and to convert the northern province. In two years' time Paulinus baptised Edwin, he carried the faith to Lincolnshire, and at Lincoln he—alone—consecrated Honorius, the last of the Canterbury missionaries to the Arch-see. But when Edwin was slain in 633 his two sons apostatized and Paulinus fled to

Kent with the queen, and filled the vacant see of Rochester until he died in 644.

King Edwin had built a wooden church in York and commenced one of stone, but of the eloquent Paulinus it is not recorded that he founded churches—as was the custom of the Kelts—except one church of great beauty at Lincoln and another at Doncaster.

When Oswald succeeded to the Northumbrian throne in 635 he looked to Iona for a bishop, and Aidan was sent

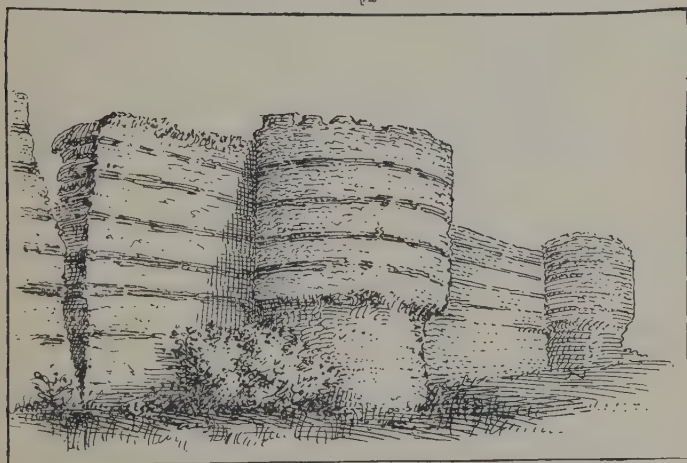


FIG. 32. BURGH CASTLE, SUFFOLK.

to him. He made the Isle of Lindisfarne the seat of his bishopric, to which place he was quickly followed by many priests and monks from Iona and Ireland, who “covered the province with their teaching.” A monastery and school were founded at Lindisfarne to which Anglian boys were sent for education. Now the Angles of that part of England received Holy Orders of the Keltic Church and imbibed the same virtues of ascetic fervour and zeal for the extension of Christ’s kingdom.

Oswald finished the stone church of St. Peter at York, and his active support and extension of the work of St. Aidan may be profitably followed in the pages of Bede's *History*. He was killed in 642 and Oswy, his brother, became king; St. Aidan died in 651 and Finan, the next bishop, built a church of oak at Lindisfarne.

Marriage was again the channel through which a province received the faith. Penda, the warlike and heathen king of Mercia, raised his son Peada to be ruler over that portion of his subjects known as the Middle Mercians or Leicestershire; and he, wishing to marry, asked Oswy for his daughter. This was granted only on condition that he became a Christian; so he placed himself under instruction and was baptised by Bishop Finan. On Peada's return with his wife they were accompanied by four priests, Cedd, Adda and Betti, three Angles in Keltic orders, and Diuma, an Irishman from Iona; they rapidly spread the faith through Mercia, nobles and commoners alike were daily baptised.

The sturdy heathen, Penda, was broad minded and did not object to the teaching of Christianity, but "he hated and despised those whom he perceived to be without the works of faith when once they had received the faith of Christ, saying that they were contemptible and wretched characters who scorned to obey their God in whom they believed" (Bede, *Hist. Eccl. III. xxi*). Penda may in this be compared with Constantius, in the episode mentioned on page 14.

At Penda's death Oswy ruled over Mercia, and Diuma was consecrated by Finan as bishop over Mercia and Lincolnshire. When Diuma died he was succeeded by Bishop Ceollach, an Irishman, and then by Bishop Trumhere, an Angle educated and ordained by the Irish,

who had founded the monastery of Ingetlingum, or Gilling in north Yorkshire; after him Jaruman succeeded in 662. A fragment of carved stone built in the wall of South Kyme church is probably a memory of the Keltic missionaries' work in Lincolnshire. Other fragments of pre-Norman sculpture surround it, but this one is distinctly of the Keltic school, and its date would be confined to the years 655—667. (Fig. 33).

When Sigebert became king of the East Saxons he used to visit his friend Oswy of Northumbria, and there he



FIG. 33. SCOTIC SCULPTURED STONE,  
SOUTH KYME, LINCOLNSHIRE.

received baptism by Bishop Finan. He requested teachers of Oswy "to convert his nation to the faith of Christ, and cleanse them in the fountain of salvation." Cedd was recalled from Mercia and with another priest was sent to preach the Word to East Saxons. The journey took them right past the Augustinian bishop at Dunwich, and although the Latin bishop at Rochester was not so very distant, the Saxon Sigebert turned to the Scotie Church for teachers. The prelates from Canterbury seem to have been ignored even by the heathen in search of Christ, and



that alone shows how greatly St. Gregory's mission had failed.

On one occasion when Cedd returned to Lindisfarne to consult Bishop Finan, that prelate called two other bishops to him that, together, they might consecrate Cedd as bishop of the East Saxons. As a bishop he returned to Essex, "built churches in divers places, and ordained priests and deacons to assist him in the Word of faith and the ministry of baptism," especially at Othona (now



FIG. 34. ST. PETER'S ON THE WALL, BRADWELL, ESSEX.

Bradwell) and Tilbury. The first was in the Roman fortress at the mouth of the River Pant, or Blackwater, where he built a church of a Roman type, with an apse and divided from the nave by a screen of three arches similar to the church at Reculver. The apse and screen are destroyed, the roof was raised and the building used as a barn until it was recently restored to Christian worship (Fig. 34).



The other monastery at Tilbury on the Thames was also a school, but that is entirely destroyed, although a few ancient stone fragments were found which, possibly, may have been of St. Cedd's monastery.

On another visit to his northern home the king requested St. Cedd to build a monastery on the Yorkshire moors, and this he did at Lastingham, on which site a portion of a noble edifice with a perfect Norman crypt now stands.

Again was Cedd called to the North when the Synod of Whitby was assembled in 646 to discuss the Easter question (see page 167), where he acted as interpreter between the Scots and the Angles; he died at Lastingham in the same year.

When the brethren of the Essex monastery heard that St. Cedd was dead, thirty of them went to Lastingham to be near his grave, but they also succumbed to the plague which had claimed their spiritual father.

The same plague spread over Essex, the people doubted the God of the Christians, their teachers were dead, and in despair they returned to the gods of their fathers. Bishop Jaruman of Mercia heard of their apostasy and taking certain priests he travelled all over Essex and "brought back the people to the way of righteousness, either forsaking or destroying the temples and altars which they had erected, they opened the churches and gladly confessed the name of Christ." Jaruman returned to Mercia and there died about the year 667, the last of the Keltic bishops of the Midland Province.

Meanwhile Archbishop Honorius consecrated Ithamar to Rochester; Thomas, and then Berhtgils to East Anglia, the last named dying in 669. Ithamar of Rochester, alone, consecrated Deusdedit to Canterbury, and he

ordained Damian to Rochester. Deusdedit died in 664, and Damian in the same year; thus ended the Canterbury succession from St. Augustine.

The Easter controversy became so acute that a Synod was held at Whitby in 664, to come to some decision as to its observance, and this point of difference between the Keltic and Latin Churches was at last settled.

**Easter.** The cycle for the computation of Easter observance was that drawn up by Anatolius, bishop of Laodicea, and the British Church was in harmony with the rest of the Catholic Church at the Council of Artes in 314. Sulpicius Severus improved on the astronomical calculations in 410, when his computation was accepted by the Church, including the British; but Ireland continued to hold that of Anatolius.

A new cycle was adopted by Rome in 541, of which the British knew nothing. The Christians of this island had become isolated from Gaul and the world generally by the barrier of Saxon heathendom, and they retained the earlier computation of the year 410, while the Latins, in the midst of progressive knowledge and in touch with the scientists of Alexandria had rectified their astronomical errors. Thus the Britons held the older Latin rule that the earliest date on which Easter Day could fall was March 25, and the latest, April 21; while the revised rule determined that the two extreme dates were March 22, and April 25.

This was the cause of much strife, and the literature on the subject is extensive; when the missionary St. Columban was on this question accused of schism he turned the tables on his accusers by charging them with the innovation.

Divergence on this point led to unseemly results,

thus: King Oswy of Northumbria was of the Scotie Church, while his Queen Eanfled had been educated amongst the Latins, and it "sometimes happened in those times that Easter was twice celebrated in one year; and that when the king, having ended his fast, was keeping Easter, the queen and her followers were still fasting, and celebrating Palm Sunday."

It was an intolerable situation, and the Synod of Whitby was assembled to decide the question. Bishop Colman of Lindisfarne and the Saxon Wilfrid were the chief spokesmen respectively of the Keltic and Latin views. Colman, who represented the Irish Church, passing through Iona to Northumbria, pleaded that they observed that which was handed down to them from St. John. On the other hand Wilfrid declared that their Easter was the same as that observed in Rome and in Gaul, as by St. Peter, who had received the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven.

King Oswy asked both of them if it were true that this power was given to St. Peter, and they both said it was so; then said the King—"He is the doorkeeper and I will not gainsay him, but I desire, as far as I know and am able, to obey his laws in all things, lest haply when I come to the gates of Heaven, there should be none to open them, he being my adversary who is proved to have the keys" (Bede, *Hist. Eccl. III. xxv*).

Colman had appealed to St. John, and the only channel through which this reference to the beloved disciple appears to be derived, is found in the Epistle of Polycrates, bishop of Ephesus, to St. Victor of Rome, who was martyred in 193, in which he says that St. John, St. Philip the Apostle, Bishop Safaris and other "great lights of Asia" all observed the fourteenth day of

the Passover according to the Gospel (Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* V. *xxiv*). If then St. Joseph was consecrated and sent to Britain by St. Philip, the appeal of Colman is made clear, and shows the vast influence emanating from Glastonbury. On the other hand St. Wilfrid was wide of the mark, and could have known nothing of the various revisions of the Easter Cycle when he asserted that the date observed by the Latins was the same as that kept by St. Peter.

The Roman Easter being thus accepted at Whitby it was gradually accepted by the various branches of the Keltic Church. The south of Ireland had not conformed at the exhortation of Archbishop Honorius in 628 (Bede *II* *xi*); Cummián relates in his letter to Segene of Iona, written in 634 (Migne, 87, 997, 5), that he excommunicated them.

The Keltic Church surrendered with misgivings, but they so earnestly wished to conform to the rest of Christendom that, not trusting to local assertions, they sent a deputation of clergy to Constantinople during the patriarchate of Methodius, 842-847, to obtain information about the Paschal controversy (*Vit. Anon. Chrysost. viii. p 321-325; edit. Savile, 1612*).

The Roman Easter was adopted by the Keltic Church in:—

South Ireland..	..	634	Iona	..	..	710
Northumbria ..	..	664	Picts	..	..	710
Strathclyde ..	..	688	North Wales	..	..	768
North Ireland..	..	692	South Wales	..	..	777
Somerset and Devon..	..	705	Cornwall	..	..	925-940

The Venerable Bede is quoted as antagonistic to the British Church, but his words do not condemn them

except on the question of Easter. The lovable old man breathed love, and it were well if all controversialists followed his example. When the British St. Aidan died, Bede lauded his character, and continued:—"but I do not approve or praise his observance of Easter at the wrong time, either through ignorance of the canonical time appointed, or, if he knew it, being prevailed on by the authority of his nation not to adopt it. Yet this I approve in him, that in the celebration of his Easter the object which he had at heart and revered and preached was the same as ours, to wit, the redemption of mankind through the Passion, Resurrection and Ascension into Heaven of the Man Christ Jesus, who is the mediator between God and man. And therefore he always celebrated Easter, not as some falsely imagine, on the fourteenth of the moon, like the Jews, on any day of the week, but on the Lord's Day, from the fourteenth to the twentieth of the moon; and this he did from his belief that the Resurrection of our Lord happened on the first day of the week, and for the hope of our resurrection which also he, with the Holy Church, believed would truly happen on that same first day of the week, now called the Lord's Day" (Bede, *Hist. Eccl. III*, *xviii*).

Other points of difference between the Scotie and Latin Churches may here be noticed.

**Baptism.** The Latin objection to British baptism is vague. It could not have been the observance of single instead of trine immersion in the water. Although single immersion prevailed for a time in Spain, it was by the advice of St. Gregory in its peculiar circumstances with regard to Arianism (*Ep. I. xliii*). It was optional in the early Gallican Church, and single immersion was



observed in parts of Brittany as late as the seventeenth century.

A rubric in the first Roman *Ordo* (8th century) directs trine immersion, and the same is ordered in the Irish Stowe Missal, which is the earliest Keltic liturgical book extant.

Chrism was used by the British in baptism as we see in St. Patrick's Epistle to Coroticus, about 497, in which he speaks of the "Christians whom in numbers I brought to God, and confirmed to Christ on the following day, on which the unction of the neophyte, in a white garment, glistened on their foreheads, when they were cruelly slaughtered and butchered by the sword." The unction is also mentioned in a life of St. Bridget (*Acta SS. i.* 119).

Archbishop Lanfranc sent a letter to Tirlagh, chief king of the Irish, in 1074, complaining that baptism is administered without chrism. Possibly this was through the scarcity of material, as we learn from Alcuin that in his time there was a lack of oil in Ireland; or it may have been that the number of anointings in baptism was not the same as the Latins observed. It is supposed that the Keltic Church used one unction, either at baptism or at confirmation immediately following; while the Latin Church anointed at both the sacraments.

The Anglo-Saxon Boniface of Mentz accused Fergil, the Irish missionary to Salzburgh, Bavaria, of incorrectly administering baptism and in 746 he appealed for his condemnation to Pope Zachary; but the pope acquitted him of anything which invalidated the rite. Then Boniface tried to get him condemned on another question. Fergil, called "the Geometer," held that the earth was round and that people lived on the other side of it; and for this he was anathematized by the pope, nearly nine



hundred years before the condemnation of Galileo in 1632.

Another point of difference was the form of the tonsure, which assumed undue proportions. The hair of the Latin ecclesiastics was so cut as to leave a ring of hair around the crown of the head, which was known as St. Peter's tonsure. In the Eastern Church the whole head was shaved, just the same as the pagan priests of the East, and this was called St. Paul's tonsure; while in the Keltic Church the hair was removed from the front of the head, in a crescent from ear to ear and this, in derision, was termed by the Latins the tonsure of Simon Magus, who was guilty of simony.

Lanfranc also complained that the Keltic Church did not recognise the prohibitions of the Roman Canon Law concerning the degrees of consanguinity; that bishops were consecrated by one bishop only; and that payment was made for Holy Orders. When there is the desire, it is easy to find fault. But the Latins should have looked at home, even amongst themselves in England, where Augustine *alone* consecrated Mellitus, Justus and Laurence and without any co-consecrator Paulinus ordained Honorius, and Ithamar of Rochester consecrated Deusdedit, both to the archiepiscopal see of Canterbury; while the Keltic Bishop Finan summoned two other bishops to join with him in consecrating Cedd bishop of the East Saxons. In both cases it was the difficulty of assembling co-consecrators that caused the non-observance of this Catholic rule.

The *Pedilavium*, or ceremonial washing of feet after baptism, was in vogue in the Gallican Church and is provided for in the Stowe Missal, but it is not in the Roman observances of that period. Other differences were in the Lections and the anointing of the hands in the ordinal.

Thus, at the Whitby conference, ended the distinctive work of the Keltic Church among the Anglo-Saxons, or as Bede refers to it—the thirty years episcopacy of the Scots in England—by conforming to the Roman rites as did St. Cedd and Chad, or by going out from it as Bishop Colman and his brethren from Lindisfarne. Thus did their line of bishops cease in England.

If it is thought that Augustine and his companions have been hardly dealt with, it is with no intent to detract from them nor their work. For a cultured people to leave their home on the sunny slopes of the Coelian Hill in the Eternal City to face the cold of northern climes and a comparatively barbarous people for the Glory of God was a tremendous and selfless work; and if they did not succeed as anticipated it was largely owing to temperament and tactless thoughtlessness. They could conceive of no organisation other than that in which they were tutored, nor could they assimilate methods foreign to them. Augustine was a saint, but not a leader of men.

This contrast between the characters of the Kelt and the Latin has to be made to give due consideration to the work of the British Church, through which the whole of Britain, Ireland, Scotland and the Isles, and the greater part of Anglo-Saxon England was first brought to the Christian faith.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### BRITISH CHURCHES.

A VERY generally expressed opinion asserts that no churches were built above ground until after Constantine's Edict of Milan in 313 gave liberty of open worship to Christians. This is wholly wrong, whether it be in the East, the West, or in Britain.

Christianity was tolerated by many of the Roman emperors, with intervening periods of persecution, although the first religious oppression to affect Britain was that under Diocletian, from the year 303 until his abdication.

The edicts for destruction, the writings of Lactantius, Bede and Geoffrey of Monmouth, with the records of rebuilding when the persecution ceased, by Gildas and Bede, and the recovery of churches by St. Wilfrid prove the erection of many churches by the Romano-Britons.

It was not only the destruction wrought under the decrees of Diocletian but the invasion of barbarous Anglo-Saxons, which has deprived this country of the monuments of early Christianity; and this latter destruction is deplored by Gildas, who says:—"God, of His own free will, kindled up among us bright luminaries of holy martyrs, whose places of burial and of martyrdom would have still kindled in the minds of the beholders no small fire of divine charity, had they not been destroyed by the

barbarians (Saxons)" (*Hist.* § 10). Those few Romano-British churches of which some remains are extant here receive attention before those of native workmanship.

In Ireland the churches were all of native workmanship, and although these escaped the ravages of the Anglo-Saxons the no less destructive Danish vikings obliterated the Christian landmarks in many districts.

**St. Martin's Canterbury** The first reference to these churches of Romano-British work is made by Bede: "There was on the east side of the city (Canterbury) a church dedicated of old to the honour of St. Martin, built whilst the Romans were still in the island, in which the queen (Bertha), who, as before said, was a Christian, was wont to pray" (Bede *Hist. Eccl. I. xxvi*).

The walls of St. Martin's nave and western part of the chancel appear to be of Roman workmanship, of stone and rubble with regular bonding courses of Roman brick in the nave, and Roman brick construction in the chancel; while a large part of the internal walls of the nave are covered with Roman plaster to the height of some feet. At about half the length of the chancel there are indications of the turning of an apse, the rectangular extension being of much later date.

The font of this church is of tub form and, unlike others, is built of twenty-two blocks of stone, on a base which Dr. Cox pronounced to be of Saxon workmanship; the body of the font is covered by later Norman decoration. Bede says that "in this church St. Augustine and his companions began to meet, to sing, to pray, to say Mass, and to baptize." So that it is quite possible that King Ethelbert was baptized in this font in 597.

It is also possible that this church which was near the district assigned for the abode of the Jutes about the

year 450 was not destroyed by them, since their anger was not aroused by Vortigern until later, when they spread over the land and made a point of destroying the buildings used for an antagonistic worship.

Another incident which may tend to suggest the preservation of this church is obtained from the *Gallia Christiana*, which records that a bishop of Soissons, named Bandaridus, was banished to Britain in 538, where he lived in a monastery for seven years, performing the humble duties of a kitchen gardener. The place in which he exercised this useful life is not revealed, it was possibly amongst the clerics attached to St. Martin's; if not, it would be in the little Irish monastery at Bosham, in Sussex, or in the undisturbed territory of Damnonia.

**Canterbury Cathedral.** "Augustine, having had his episcopal see granted him in the royal city, with the support of the king *recovered* therein a church, which he was informed had been built of old by the faithful among the Romans, and consecrated it in the name of the Holy Saviour, our Divine Lord Jesus Christ" (Bede, *Hist. Eccl. I. xxiii*). From the language of Bede it is clear that the first cathedral of Canterbury was originally a Romano-British church, which had been secularised by the heathen Jutes, and was reclaimed for the worship of God by Augustine.

A description of this church is given by Eadmer, who from a singing boy in the cathedral was promoted to the office of precentor, and had an almost life-long daily opportunity of learning every detail of the church.

"This was the very church which had been built by Romans, as Bede bears witness in his history, and which was duly arranged in some parts in imitation of the Church of the Blessed Prince of the Apostles, Peter . . .

The great altar which was constructed of rough stones and mortar, was close to the wall at the eastern part of the presbytery. . . . To reach the altar a certain crypt,

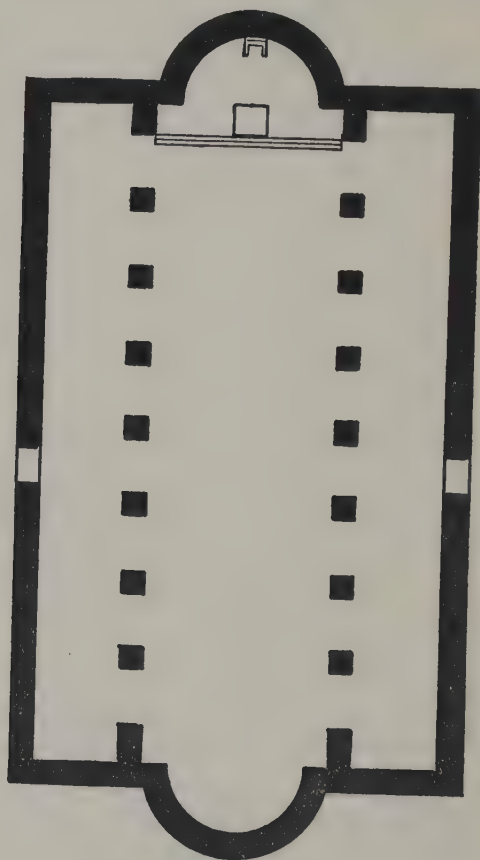


FIG. 35. CONJECTURAL PLAN OF THE ROMANO-BRITISH CHURCH AT CANTERBURY.

which the Romans call a *Confessionary*, had to be ascended by means of several steps from the choir of the singers. . . . Thence the choir of the singers was extended westwards into the body of the church, and shut out



from the multitude by a proper enclosure. Beyond the middle of the length of the body there were two towers which projected beyond the aisles of the church.

The extremity of the church was adorned by the oratory of Mary, the blessed Mother of God; which was so constructed that access could only be had to it by steps. At its eastern part there was an altar consecrated to the worship of that Lady. . . . When the priest performed the Divine mysteries at this altar he had his face turned to the east, towards the people who stood below. Behind him to the west, was the pontifical chair constructed with handsome workmanship of large stones and cement; and far removed from the Lord's Table, being contiguous to the wall of the church." (*De Reliquis S. Audoeni, etc., MS. C.C.C.*).

In these extracts all that is definitely of the period after St. Augustine is omitted, and only those to do with the actual Romano-British fabric are quoted. It was built after Constantine's accession to the purple, and after he had built the church of St. Peter in Rome which was dedicated in 324.

This church was destroyed by fire in 1067, and the only possible remaining fragment of the Romano-British church is some masonry of Kentish ragstone covered with Roman plaster in the base of the western wall of the crypt.

**St. Pancras, Canterbury.** The foundations of another Roman building, which was probably a Christian church adapted by the Saxons to idol worship, lies between Canterbury and St. Martin's church. The first reference to it is made by William Thorn, a fourteenth century monk.

"There was not far from the city, towards the east,

as it were midway between the Church of St. Martin and the walls of the city, a temple, or idol house, where Ethelbert, according to the rites of his tribe, was wont to pray, and with his nobles sacrifice to his demons and not to God. This temple St. Augustine purged from the filth of the Gentiles; and having broken the image which was in it, changed it into a church and dedicated it in the name of the martyr St. Pancras"; and he mentions that it had a southern porch.

The Roman foundations of St. Pancras' Church are orientated and consist of a nave and indications of an apse, with a porch on the south and foundations of a chamber, or tower, on the west.

**Reculver.** The ruined church of Reculver, on the north coast of Kent, stands on Roman foundations within the walls of the *Castrum*, or Roman station of Regulbium. The foundations show an orientated plan of nave with square piers on each side dividing the aisles, and an apse, which is paved with concrete faced with a smooth polished surface of red pounded tiles of Roman work.

Before the later church was destroyed in 1809 it contained other Roman remains. The chancel was separated from the nave by two classical pillars supporting three arches turned in Roman brick, the middle arch being of wider span than the others. The two pillars are now placed in a garden on the north side of Canterbury Cathedral.

**Lyminge.** In Kent, not far from Folkestone, on the south side of the parish church of Lyminge, there are the foundations of an orientated Roman basilica with a western apse. The eastern part, which also has an apse, appears to be of later work, a restoration of the Roman

plan in early Saxon times by Ethelburga, the daughter of King Ethelbert, who here founded the first Saxon monastery in England in 633, after she fled with Paulinus from Yorkshire. There seems to be no doubt but that she rebuilt on the ruins of a Romano-British church.

**Silchester.** During the excavations of the Roman city of Silchester by Mr. Fox and Sir W. H. St. John Hope, they uncovered the plan of a Romano-British church in a conspicuous position outside the south-eastern corner of the Forum. It is the plan of a complete basilica, with an eastern narthex, a nave with continuous foundations for the pillars dividing the aisles, a western apse flanked by quasi-transepts, which would represent the Diaconicon on the north and the Chapel of the Prothesis on the south. Fragments of a pavement of red tesserae remain, with a square footpace, on which the square altar stood, of red, black, white and purbeck marble mosaic. Pieces of coloured plaster indicate that the walls were painted.

In front of the narthex there is a square platform of tiles set in a pavement of flints; this is the position of the laver, or fountain, which was set in the midst of the atrium, or court of basilican churches for the faithful to cleanse themselves before entering the church, and which is a feature in early Western and Eastern Churches. There is no water supply laid on at this spot, and it was probably obtained from a well which remains west of the apse, but there is a shallow pit covered by a perforated stone to drain off the waste water. No signs of the atrium remain, but the excavators suggest that the whole church, foundation and well were contained within one court.

The whole building was only 42 feet in length, but it contains in miniature all the essential features of the

churches built by Constantine at Tyre and in Rome. This places the date of its erection between the Edict of Milan A.D. 313 and the withdrawal of the Romans in 409.

Traces of fire are found in the ruins, so the use of the church by British Christians may be pictured until the

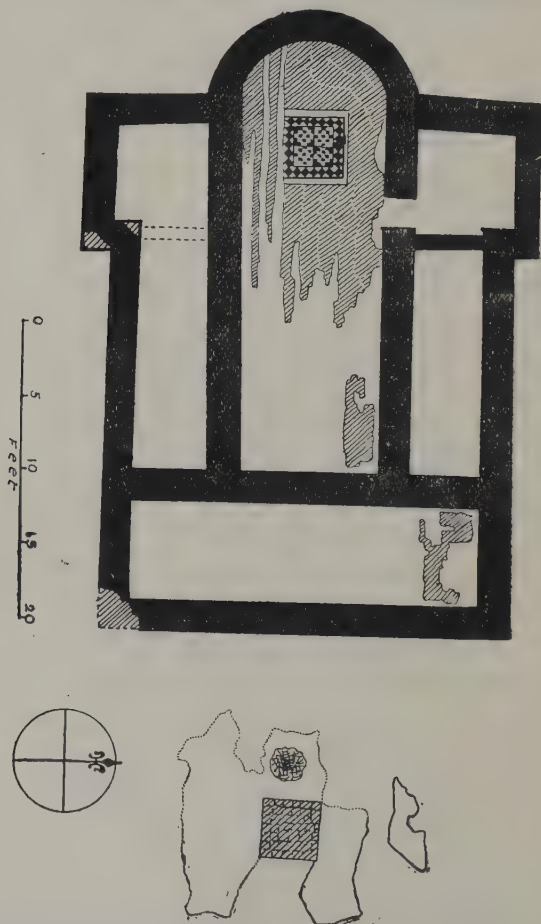


FIG. 36. ROMANO-BRITISH CHURCH AT SILCHESTER.  
By permission of the Society of Antiquaries.

Saxon hordes which landed at Portsmouth in 495 and 501 under Cerdic and Port penetrated Hampshire in their destructive and desecrating invasion, at about the same time that one of the three Perpetual Choirs of Britain at Ambresbury was destroyed.

The church of St. Giles at Langford, near Maldon,



FIG. 37. FOUNDATIONS OF BASILICA,  
LANGFORD, ESSEX.

Essex, stands on the site of a church which had an apse at both the eastern and western ends, a basilican plan without aisles, presumptive evidence that the original was a Romano-British church, which is strengthened by the British prefix *Lan* before the name was Anglicized.

These few examples are all of the actual Roman built Churches which are known to remain in small degree, others can only be imagined, but among them there was one outside York, the seat of the Roman administration of this island. In the account of the rescue of the British Cadwalla's niece from the house of the still pagan Edwin at York, which rings true, although it is from the pen of Geoffrey of Monmouth, in whose work the whole story may be found (xii. 7). Brian, the captive's brother, penetrated into Edwin's palace at York in disguise, he had word with his sister, and made an appointment to meet her "near an old church outside the city." Neither is there much doubt that after the death of St. Alban, "when peaceable Christian times were restored, a church of wonderful workmanship, and altogether worthy to commemorate his martyrdom, was erected," and that it was raised by the Romans or under their supervision.

**St. Peter's, Cornhill, London.** Before the Romans extended the commercial town of London westwards to Ludgate and Newgate the confines of it extended from Aldgate and the Tower to the Walbrook, by the present Mansion House.

This area included Cornhill, on which it is said the Romano-Britons built a church. In the vestry is an engraved plate setting forth the origin of the church, a copy of one which was there before the Great Fire of 1666. The original wording as preserved in the pages of Weever



(*Funeral Monuments* A.D. 1631, p. 413), is to this effect:—

“Be hit known to al Men that the yeers of our Lord God clxxix, Lucius, the fyrst christen king of this lond, then callyd Brytayne, fowndyd the fyrst Chyrch in London, that is to sey, the Chyrch of Sent Peter upon Cornhyl; and he fowndyd ther an Archbishoppys See, and made that Chirch the Metropolitant and cheef chirch of this Kindom, and so enduryd the space of cccc yeerys and more, unto the commyng of Sent Austen, an Apostyl of Englund, the whych was sent into the lond by Sent Gregory, the Doctor of the Chirch, in the tym of King Ethelbert, and then was the Archbyshoppys See and Pol (pall) removyd from the aforeseyd Chirch of Sent Peters upon Cornhyl unto Derebernaum, that now ys callyd Canterbury, and ther yt remeynyth to this dey.

And Millet Monk (Bishop Mellitus), whych came into this lond wyth Sent Austen, was made the fyrst Bishop of London, and hys See was made in Powllys Chyrch. And this Lucius, Kyng, was the fyrst Fowndyr of Peters Chyrch upon Cornhyl; and he regnyd King in this Ilond after Brut mccxlv yeerys. And the yeerys of our Lord God a cxxiiii Lucius was crownyd Kyng, and the yeers of hys reygne lxxvii yeerys, and he was beryd aftyr sum cronekle at London, and aftyr sum cronekil he was beryd at Glowcester, at that plase wher the ordyr of Sent Francys standeth.”

This early and primatial reputation survived through all centuries, and on it the precedence of the rectors of St. Peter's was upheld against the claims of the rectors of St. Magnus the Martyr and St. Nicholas, Cole Abbey, in 1399 and again in 1417; the Mayor and Aldermen deciding that the rector of St. Peter's “shall go alone after all the other Rectors of the same city.”

Stow, in his *Survey of London* gives a list of the Archbishops of London:—

“The Archbishops’ names I find only to be set down by Joseline of Furness, in his book of British bishops, and not elsewhere. Thean (saith he) was the first archbishop of London, in the time of Lucius, who built the said church of St. Peter, in a place called Cornhill in London, by the aid of Ciran, chief butler to King Lucius.

(2) Elvanus was the second, and he built a library to the same church adjoining, and converted many of the Druids (learned men in the Pagan law) to the Christian faith.

(3) Cadar was the third, then followed (4) Obinus, (5) Conan, (6) Paludius, (7) Stephen, (8) Iltute, (9) Dedwin, (10) Thedred, (11) Hillary, (12) Guidelium, (13) Vodimus, slain by the Saxons, (14) Theanus, the fourteenth, fled with the Britons into Wales, about the year of Christ 587.”

“I read of a bishop of London (not before named) in the year of Christ 326, to be present at the second council, holden at Arles, in the time of Constantine the Great, who subscribed thereunto in these words: *Ex provinciae Britanniae Civitate Londiniensi Restitutus Episcopus*, as plainly appeareth in the first tome of the councils, he writeth not himself archbishop, and therefore maketh the matter of archbishops doubtful, or rather, overthroweth that opinion.”

On clearing away certain buildings adjacent to this church in 1922, Roman foundations and walls were discovered close to the south-west of the supposed site of the Forum; which tend to support the traditional antiquity of St. Peter’s.

At Bosham, in Kent, Wilfrid found some Irish monks serving a church when he began the conversion of

that province; and the foundations of part of the present church are found to rest upon Roman masonry which appears to be of basilican form. Remains of an extensive Roman settlement were found in the neighbourhood of this church, close to the water's edge and convenient for maritime commerce.

Remains of native-built British churches, including those in Ireland and Scotland are far more plentiful, but there is a great deal of misconception concerning them. The statements that all the early churches in Britain were of wood until the end of the eighth century are ill advised. Churches as well as habitations were constructed of the available material of the neighbourhood in which they were erected, with consideration of the hard or soft ground which was to support them, and the haste or leisure with which they were required.

Some of the churches were of mud, such as that described by Tirechan in his *Annotations on the Life of St. Patrick*. "And behold, Patrick went up to the land which is called Foirrgea of the sons of Amolngid, to divide it among the sons of Amolngid, and he built there a church of moist earth, squared, because wood was not at hand."

Structures of wattle, wattle and daub, osiers and rushes, of branches and intertwined withies, which were quickly erected from the materials ready to hand in fen districts, were frequently used,

The first oratory erected at Glastonbury was fashioned "of twisted twigs," says William of Malmesbury (ch. i); and later on he mentions it as being of rushes (ch. vi). The rising ground on which it was built was surrounded by morasses, where reeds were plentiful. This oratory was accounted so holy, as being built by a disciple of our Lord,

that the wattle was preserved by timbering the outside walls and covering the roof with lead in the sixth century, and by internal boarding in the seventh century, until it was burnt in 1180.

The Britons were famed for their interwoven basket work, it was exported to Italy, and every fashionable woman of Rome coveted a specimen. They even adopted the Keltic word *basket* into their vocabulary (*Juvenal, Sat. xii*); the very name of Kilclief, between Saul and Lake Cuan, means "The Hurdle Church"; and Y Capel Gwiall at Nannerch is "The Wattled Chapel."

St. Columba's church at Derry was made of timber and wattle (*Leabhar Breac, 32*), and St. Kevin built his oratory of rods of wood (*Bolland, Acta SS. June 1*).

In the Martyrology of Donegal it is said that St. Mochaio, the first abbot of Nendrum, went with seven score young men to cut wattles for making his church. He received the tonsure from St. Patrick before founding this monastery on Nendrum, or Mahee island in Strangford Lough in Co. Down, which wattle church preceded the one of stone which has recently been uncovered (Fig. 38).

The Register of Lanercast Priory contains a notice of a chapel of wattle-work at Triermain; and many others may be found in ancient records.

Wood was easily obtainable in forest-clad Britain, and was quickly put together for the reception of the early converts by the missionaries. St. Derbhfraich, in the fifth century, built a church of wood at Clogher, in Tyrone (*Litany of Ængus*); and in the same period St. Ciaran did the same at Saighir (Colgan, *Acta SS. 458*).

In the sixth century St. Kentigern built his church of St. Asaph of dressed wood "after the manner of the Britons (*more Britonum*), since they were not yet either

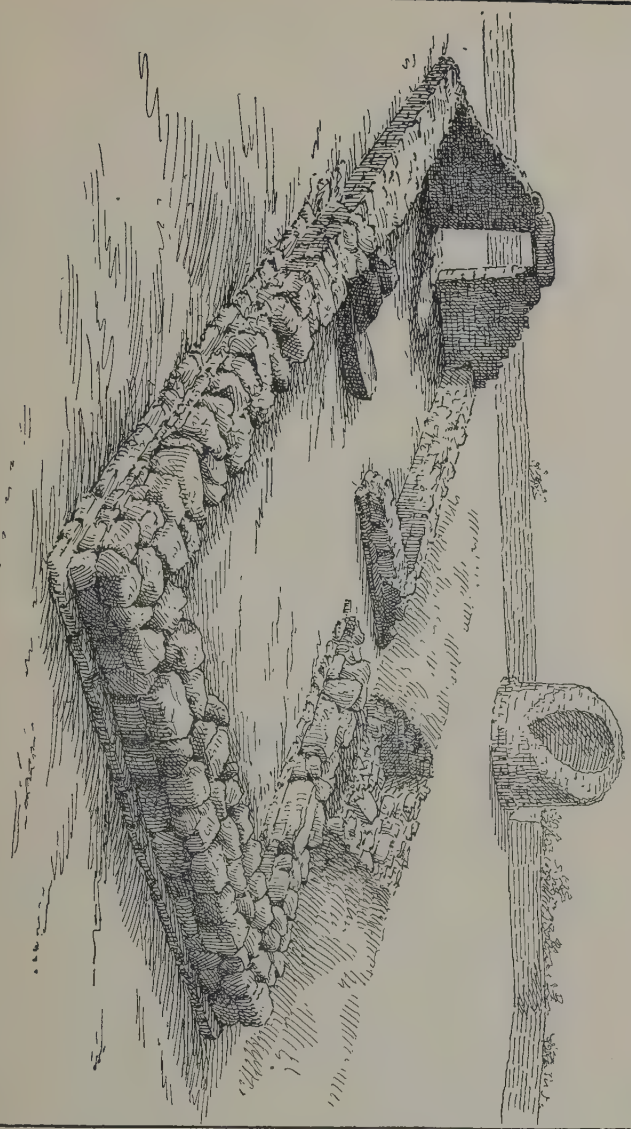


FIG. 36. ORATORY OF NENDRUM MONASTERY, NAHEH ISLAND, CO. DOWN.



accustomed or able to build with stone." This is from a twelfth century Life of the Saint. (Pinkerton, *Vitae SS. Sect.* 248).

St. Mulling's church of wood was erected by St. Gobbon, who was famous in Ireland for working in all the arts of wood and stone (Colgan, *Acta SS.* 619). When St. Finan, a monk of Iona, succeeded Bishop Aidan at Landisfarne he built a church fit for the episcopal see, not of stone, but entirely of hewn oak, and covered it with reeds, after the Scotie (Irish) manner; but Eadbert, who was bishop of the same see in 698, took off the thatch and caused it to be entirely covered, both roof and walls, with plates of lead (Bede, *Hist. Eccl. III. xxv*).

The first church of Lastingham, Yorkshire, built by St. Cedd in 660, was of wood; and St. Monenna's monastery in Ireland "was constructed of smooth planks according to the fashion of the nation of Scots (Irish), who were not accustomed to erect stone walls" (Conchubran, *Life of St. Monenna*).

The Annals of Ulster for 849 records the burning of a wooden church with two hundred and sixty people; and in the year 891 we read that on the feast of St. Martin a hurricane blew down a great many trees in the woods and carried the churches from their places.

Wooden churches were built long after the British period, but only one Saxon church of timber remains, at Greensted, in Essex, an example which shows how the timbers were adzed to the required size and set upright. In Ireland also, churches were sometimes built of wood into the twelfth century, as may be read in St. Bernard's Life of St. Malachy.

In rocky ground, where trees were scarce, as in parts of Cornwall, Wales, Westmorland, and the north of



Britain, in Scotland and in certain districts of Ireland, stone was the material most ready to hand, and was used for building purposes. This is exemplified at the present day where field hedging is of dry stone walling instead of hedgerows of brambles, thorn and nut to which the eye is accustomed and which give so great a charm over the larger part of England.

Stone structures of the early British Church were but the adaptation of the pagan and secular custom which



FIG. 39. COLUMBAN ORATORY, INCHCOLM.

had been in vogue from the Neolithic Age. The rath and the cashel were constructed of dry walling surrounding the beehive huts of the people. Grimspound on Dartmoor and Caher Namactirech (Fig. 24), may be taken as examples of ancient British settlements, and also as typical of British or Irish Monasteries, except that they contain no churches. Large undressed stones are laid in order with perpendiculars at intervals for stability, and with the interstices skilfully filled with smaller stones; earth, moss or grass being rammed into the joints in order

to reduce the draughts as much as possible. The construction of dry walling is not so very simple, it is an art, only acquired by practice.

In the fifth century the oratory of St. Crumtheris, near Armagh, was stone-built, and many remains of rude stone buildings are to be seen in Ireland, in Scotland and the Isles. Stone oratories of the earliest period, to the seventh century, were small rectangular structures of dry walling, with the roof formed by overlapping the stones internally until the sides met beneath a line of cap-stones at the apex, as at Tempul Gel (Fig. 42) and the oratory at Incholm (Fig. 39). These structures invariably had a doorway at the west end and a small window in the east wall above the altar.

The earliest oratories were very small, probably the smallest is the church of St. Moliase on Inismurray, co. Sligo, which is 9 feet long by 8 feet broad, although the greater number were about 14 feet by 10 feet, as that of Gallarus, in Kerry, which is the most perfect remaining example of a dry-walled building and is beautifully constructed (Fig. 40).

Sixty feet was considered the length of a large church; and when St. Patrick ordered that a church should be built by King Conallus with a length of 60 feet, he threatened that "If the church be lessened thy reign shall not be for long nor shall it be firmly established" (*Tirechan*).

Tables of ancient oratories in the British Isles, with their respective measurements, are given by Mr. Basil Stallybrass in *Archaeologia Cambrensis*, 1914, 280—282; which, however, do not include some interesting examples, for instance, the oratory of St. Bridget at Beckery, Glastonbury, which is also valuable as illustrating the

intercourse of the early Irish Christians with the venerable Church which was the "Cradle of British Christianity."

The doorways, and generally the windows, had horizontal lintels, with the jambs narrowing towards the top, which slanting sides were continued long after the walls were mortared. Even in these primitive structures the British perceived the value of a long stone placed some courses above the lintel, a feature which developed into



FIG. 40. ORATORY OF GALARUS.

the retaining arch of the Middle Ages. This type of building is found in the remains of all the early monasteries; it is shown in St. Brendan's oratory, in the Columban oratory at Inchcolm (Fig. 39), an island on the east coast of Scotland, and the very perfect structure of Gallarus at Kilmalkedar, in county Kerry, Ireland (Fig. 40).

On Puffin Island, Ynys Seiriol, or Preistholm, a small island off the south-east of Anglesea, there are some conventual remains around the foundations of an early ora-

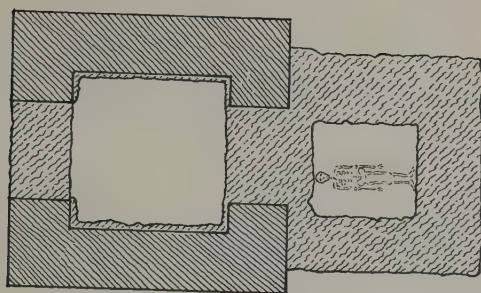
tory. It is one of the small rectangular type—with the tower of the present church standing upon it—but it has another feature, not a chancel as it appears to be in the plan, but the “bedd,” or grave, containing a skeleton, probably of St. Seiriol the founder.

St. Seiriol of the race of Cunedda founded a Tribe of the Church at Penmon, Anglesea, which became so famous that many foreigners came to it for instruction (*Iolo MS. ff. 125, 526*). Late in life he retired to this isle, in the early part of the sixth century, and it is probably his skeleton which lies within the bedd.

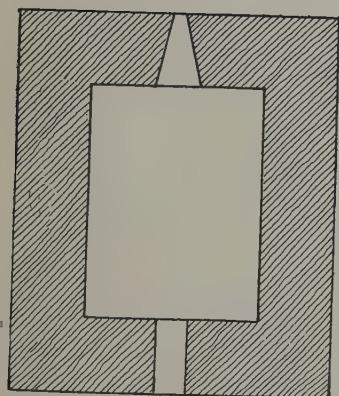
A similar arrangement is seen at Pennant Melangell, Montgomeryshire, where at the east end of the church a small square building projects, with no access from the church, which is called Cell-y-Bedd, or the Cell of the Grave. A number of carved fragments of the eleventh century were found in the walls, and, reconstructed, they prove to be of the shrine which stood in the cell (*Wall, Shrines of British Saints, p. 47*).

In the next period, from the sixth to the ninth century, chancels were often formed under the one roof, divided from the nave by a stone screen. This is seen in the oratories of St. Piran (Fig. 43) and St. Gothian in Cornwall, both of which have a stone seat, or bench-table along a portion of the internal walls; and in Teampull Ronan, on the isle of North Rona, north of the Butt of Lewis. In this type the doorway is usually on the south side, and a sacristy is attached, as may be seen in the church of Nendrum (Fig. 38).

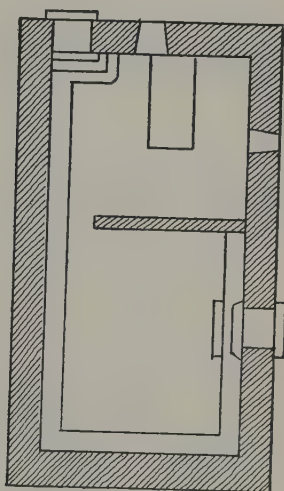
A rough mortar is sometimes found in buildings towards the end of this period, as on Friar's Island, near Killaloe, where a dry barrel vault of radiating stones is beneath an outer mortared roof. At the same time



Oratory of St. Seiriol.



Tempul Gel.



Oratory of St. Piran

PLANS OF EARLY KELTIC ORATORIES.

- FIG. 41. ST. SEIRIOL'S, YNYS SEIRIOL, OFF ANGLESEY.  
 FIG. 42. TEMPUL GEL, DINGLE, KERRY.  
 FIG. 43. ST. PIRAN'S, NORTH CORNWALL.



rudely dressed squared stones are a transition heralding more elaborate buildings, especially in Ireland, where the influence of Roman masonry, already adopted by the British Church, was conveyed across the channel. Chancels of narrower dimensions were added to older churches or included in the plans of new churches, and a chancel arch of radiating stones was introduced. Examples of these are numerous.

Meanwhile St. Ninian built a stone church at Whithorn, in Wigton Bay, about the year 400, of which Bede writes: "It is commonly called the White House, because he there built a church of stone, which was not usual among the Britons" (Bede, *Hist. Eccl. III. iv*).

Most writers take this to mean that it was the first known church of stone erected in Britain, and that hitherto all churches were invariably of wood; but it was nothing of the sort. St. Ninian had been trained in Rome, in the midst of beautiful architectural surroundings. He had dwelt in Gaul in the companionship of St. Martin with Roman structures around him, and when he started to build his church among the Strathclyde Britons he determined to erect something worthy of its purpose, such as he had seen abroad, and such as were dotted over Britain in the habitations and strongholds of the Latin governors.

So he built his church of dressed stone, which gave it so white a surface that it was termed the *Candida Casa*, an appearance such as it was impossible to obtain with undressed rough walling.

It has been conjectured that Ninian imported masons for the building; but this was quite unnecessary. The Romans had by forced labour made the Britons build their fortified stations and houses under their supervision,



and the Britons had learnt the art of stone dressing, of making thin cemented joints, the use of the plumb-line, the turning of arches, and other masonic mysteries. Tacitus tells us that Agricola encouraged the Britons to cultivate building (*Agricola* *xxi*), and when Constantine rebuilt the city of Autun he brought the workmen from Britain, which very much abounded with the best artificers. *Panegyric on Constantine*, *ch. xxi*; *Eumenius ii. vi*.

A study of place-names might discover traces of the British Church over the England which was swept clean of Christianity by the Anglo-Saxons before they received the faith. One such example is seen in Aylesbury; the first part of the name is a Saxonized form of the Keltic *Eglwys*, a church, it was the church of a chieftain (see p. 146), who fled before the ravaging Teutons to Anglesea, and became the ancestor of the Tudors.

So slight a sketch of the Keltic churches fails to convey an adequate idea of the numerous sanctuaries formerly spread over the British Isles, but it is enough to convince the student that the whole country was ministered to by Christian priests.

The chancel has been noticed as a feature of the churches from about the seventh century, and from the description of St. Bridget's church at Kildare, given by Cogitosus, who wrote before the exhumation of Bishop Conlaeth's body in 799, an insight of the internal arrangements is gained.

"The church in which repose the bodies of Bishop Conlaeth and the virgin St. Bridget, on the right and left of the decorated altar, adorned in ornaments with various enrichments of gold, silver, gems and precious stones, with crowns of gold and silver depending from above. For, the number of the faithful of both sexes increasing,

the church occupied a spacious area, it was raised to a perilous height, and was decorated with painted pictures. Within it had three large oratories, separated by partitions of planks, under one roof of the greater building, wherein one partition—decorated and painted with figures and covered with linen hangings—extended along the breadth in the eastern part of the church. This partition had two doors at its extremities, through the door on the right side the chief bishop entered the sanctuary accompanied by his regular attendants and those who are deputed to the sacred ministry of offering sacred and dominical sacrifices to the Lord. Through the other door, placed in the left part of the above-mentioned partition, and lying transversely, none enter but the abbess with her virgins and faithful widows, when about to participate in the banquet of the body and blood of Jesus Christ. But another partition, dividing the pavement of the nave unto two equal parts, extends from the western side to the transverse partition lying across the breadth. Moreover, the church has many windows, and one ornamented doorway on the right side through which the priests and the faithful of the male sex enter the church, and another doorway on the left side through which the congregation of virgins and faithful women are accustomed to enter.

“Thus, in one very great temple a multitude of people of various ranks and orders, sex and situation, separated by partitions, in different order but with one mind, worship Almighty God.”

In the oratory of St. Piran (Fig. 43) it will be seen that the altar is placed with its long axis east and west; this is not the normal position, but it was evidently thus placed for the orientation of the bodies enclosed in it, for this altar was a tomb enclosing three bodies which were in

position when the altar was opened in 1835. One skeleton was that of St. Piran, who died about 480, one was of a woman, probably his mother who accompanied him from Ireland, and the other was possibly one of his companions.

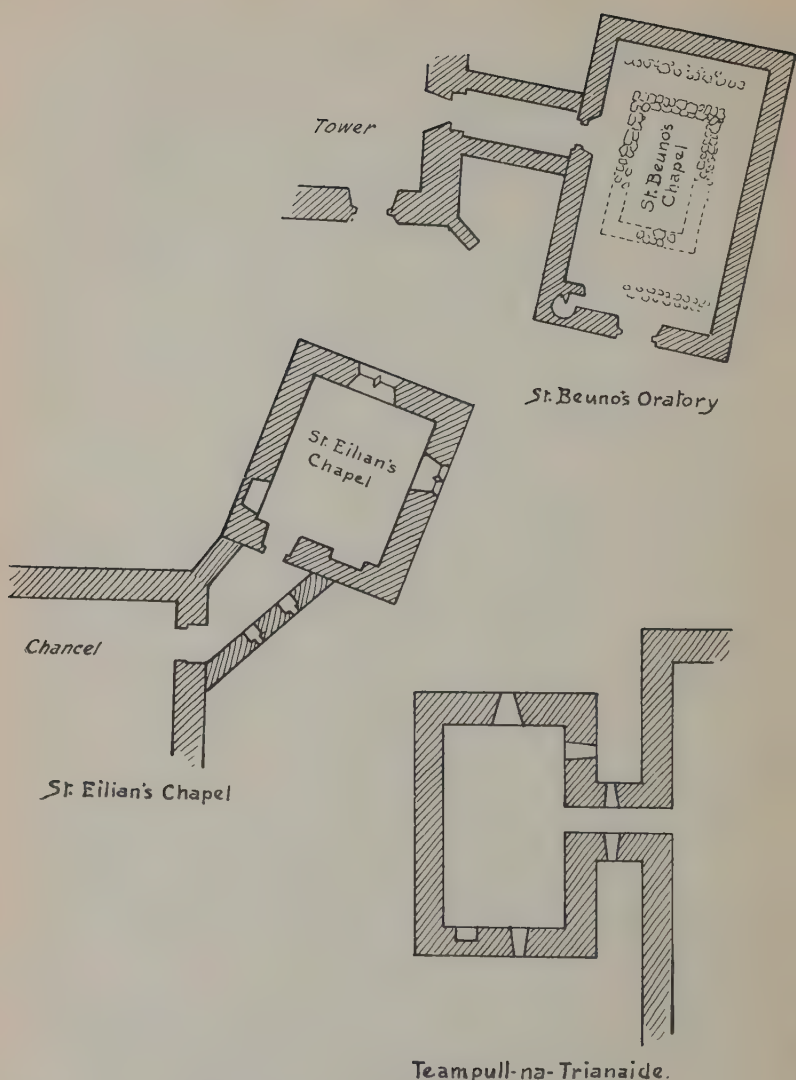
The altars were of stone, though evidently the *mensa*, or table slab, was sometimes either supported on wooden legs, or had wooden pillars supporting surrounding curtains, as when St. Bridget received the veil she bowed her head and with her hands touched one of the wooden pillars of the altar, which ever afterwards remained green and sound (Canisii *Op. i.* 417).

Stone pegs, such as may be seen over the little east windows of some of the oratories would be for the suspension of lamps, book satchels or reliquaries; for the books of the Gospels and Psalms and the caskets of relics were carried by the missionaries in satchels slung around the neck. The *Polaire* was a book-satchel, and the *Tiac* for a reliquary. St. Patrick was followed by a boy with a *polaire* on his back (*Leabhar Breac*), and he gave a book satchel to St. Fiacc. Some of these satchels are preserved in various museums (Fig. 29).

Memorials of some of the early oratories are enshrined in more modern buildings, but in only a limited number of cases are they recognisable. In a few curious examples they are attached to the later churches by vaulted passages.

Explorations beneath the pavement of the sixteenth century chapel of St. Beuno at Clynnogfawr, Carnarvonshire, led to the discovery of the foundations of the original oratory in which St. Beuno worshipped, and was laid to rest about the year 642. It is known as *Eglwys y bedd*, "The Church of the Grave."

Leland, writing about 1537, speaks of "the old church



Teampull-na-Trianaide.

ANCIENT FOUNDATIONS ATTACHED TO LATER CHURCHES.

FIG. 44. ST. BEUNO'S, CLYNNOGFAWR.

FIG. 45. ST. EILIAN'S, LLANEILIAN, ANGLESEY.

FIG. 46. THE HOLY TRINITY, CARINISH, NORTH UIST, HEBRIDES.

where St. Bennow lyith is hard by the new." It is connected by a passage to the south-west of the western tower of the parish church; the foundations measure 18 ft. long and 9 ft. 9in. broad, on the inside, and a small walled court, in which were numerous burials, surrounded the oratory (Fig. 44).

In Anglesey, at Llaneilian—the Church of Eilian—a passage from the south-eastern angle of the chancel leads into a chapel built on the site of St. Eilian's oratory.

A grant of land on which to build an oratory was obtained by St. Eilian from Caswallon, prince of North Wales, in 450, and Caswallon built it. On his death St. Eilian was buried there, and it became the "bedd," or grave of the saint, to which pilgrims resorted all through the Middle Ages, dropping their offerings into an oaken chest, called the *Cyff Eilian*, "the Chest of Eilian," which is still preserved in the chapel which supplanted the old oratory (Fig. 45).

Another oratory attached to a larger church in a similar manner, is in a weird spot on a hill at Carinish, in the south of North Uist, on Long Island, Hebrides. The larger building, 63 ft. long internally, is the Teampull-na-Trianaide, or Temple of the Holy Trinity; but the noticeable feature is a small rectangular oratory connected by a vaulted passage to the north-east of the Temple. Both the buildings are ruinous, and the chapel—23 ft. long by 13 ft. broad, is a thirteenth century building on the site of an older oratory. All knowledge of its origin seems to be lost; it was, in the first place, probably built by one of the venturesome monks of Iona who "sought a solitude in the sea," and it is certainly considered to be of great sanctity by the preservation of the site—as was the case with the first wattled oratory at Glastonbury—

and its attachment to the later church, with a passage for the admission of pilgrims (Fig. 46).

The Round Towers, of which there are over a hundred in Ireland and a few in Scotland, over which much discussion as to date and purpose has been exercised, appear from Professor Stokes (*Ireland and the Celtic Church*) to be an importation from central Syria—the region between the rivers Jordan, Leontes and Orontes on the west, and the great desert of Mesopotamia on the east—where all the Christian buildings were erected before the invasion of the Saracens in A.D. 700, when the faithful were dispersed. This invasion, coupled with the decrees of Leo the Isaurian against images and pictures, drove the Byzantine architects and artists to the West, and, *via* Ravenna and Gaul, some of them reached Ireland in the eighth century, and, amongst other things, they introduced the lofty round towers. In many other ways those monks from the East left a lasting influence in the Church of Ireland.



## CHAPTER XIX.

### CHURCH FURNITURE.

**I**N the earliest stone oratories the converging walls which formed the roof were as a canopy to the altar; and projecting stones provided pegs from which to hang the satchels containing reliquaries and books; the altars were of stone, standing beneath the one narrow window in the east wall, which was the only means of lighting the building except by an open doorway. Beyond these simple arrangements there is no knowledge of the general internal appearance of the primitive churches of the British Isles.

An exception is found in the earliest description of an interior, that is of the wooden church of St. Bridget at Kildare (see page 195), which was decorated with painted figures and linen hangings. The altar is described by Cogitosus as beautified with gold, silver and gems, with crowns of gold and silver depending from above. In this the Keltic Church was at one with all Christendom; it was the custom of kings to give votive crowns for suspension over altars in honour of the King of Kings from Whom they derived their authority. It was a custom which extended over the early mediæval period.

We are told that St. Patrick found an altar with four glass chalices in a cave when he went to Ireland, which demonstrated that there was an earlier celebration of

Christian rites in that land; and the same saint had many things made for the new churches he was to found. In the Book of Armagh it is said that "Patrick carried with him across the Shannon fifty bells, fifty patens, and fifty chalices, altars, books of the Law, books of the Gospels, and left them in new places."

But the Keltic missionaries were frequently accompanied by artificers in wood and metal, so that they could make on the spot those things which would be required when the people were converted and the church founded; and, indeed, some of the bishops and priests were themselves skilled craftsmen. Dagaeus and Asic, who were famed for their cunning in the arts, went with St. Patrick in his journeys; and St. Columba made many crosses, pastoral staves and book-satchels, while others made metal book covers, jewelled and otherwise ornamented, such as was the means of preserving the parchment leaves of the Lindisfarne Gospels when it fell into the sea, so closely was it clasped.

Asic, or Assicus, the brass worker to St. Patrick, was a bishop, and he made altars and book-cases (or covers), which he made in plates:—"and also the three square plates well finished, which I saw—that is to say, the plate for the church of Patrick in Armagh, and another in the church of Alofind, and the third in the great church of Saul, over the altar of St. Felart the bishop" (Tirechan). These plates were presumably patens, some of which, in early times, were square or rectangular, such as the Gourdon paten. The altars which he made were probably portable, or super-altars, which for Mass were placed on an unconsecrated slab; such an altar was found in St. Cuthbert's coffin.

The *Ulster Journal of Archaeology* (ii. 182) describes

some beautifully worked vessels of gold, silver and bronze, flagons and cups with lacertine ornament, which are assigned to a date between the years 400 and 600. Others, of a little later date, enriched with chaste ornamentation are preserved in the Royal Irish Academy and in places on the continent where the Keltic missionaries ministered.

The altar—which was termed “the seat of the Heavenly Sacrifice”—was covered in a purple cloth (Gildas *Ep.* p. 37). Christ appeared in a purple vestment to St. Mulling (Reeves, *British Culdees*, 77), and that was the royal colour of the heavenly king. From the very few references, and especially miniatures, purple seems to have been the colour of the priests’ chasubles, as seen in the *Book of Kells* and other manuscripts. From the writings of St. Germain and St. Gregory of Tours we learn that this colour was used for altar cloths in Gaul at the same period; the Anglo-Saxons received this tradition from the British Church, and the use of purple altar-palls was the custom long after the Latins had absorbed the native church. (In a royal purple the crimson predominates over the blue).

In the early Irish canons—at the time of Oblation—it is ordered that the deacon shall be vested in an alb (iii. 6). The sacerdotal vestments are rendered in a very conventional way in the few extant representations, and the folds of them are of archaic crudity; but again, they are decorative and not realistic figures. The alb, tunicle, dalmatic and chasuble are seen on the statuettes of the reliquary of St. Moedoc (Fig. 47); and on the Soiscel Molaise, or box of St. Molaise’s Gospels (Fig. 48), there is a figure in an alb and chasuble, with a shoulder decoration, which is sometimes erroneously called a “rational”; it is similar to a sort of cape which is worn on certain

occasions by the bishops of Toul and of Eichstadt, and in England developed into the embroidered "flower" of the chasuble. As the Irish St. Mansuetus was the first bishop of Toul, in France, the peculiar ornament allowed to the bishops of that see by the pope probably had its origin in the Irish Church.

The maniple hanging from the left hand, and not from the wrist as in later ages, is seen in the Golden Psalter. Adamnan refers to the sandals in his *Life of St. Columba*,



*From the Breac Moedog.*

FIG. 47. MASS VESTMENTS  
CONVENTIONALLY SHOWN.



*From the Soiscel Molaise.*

FIG. 48. MASS VESTMENTS,  
WITH SHOULDER ORNAMENT.

and they are represented on the feet of the Evangelists in Keltic manuscripts.

A liturgical comb was used for combing the hair of a bishop before Mass; the comb of St. Kentigern was preserved in Glasgow Cathedral, and that of St. Boisil, the Keltic abbot of Melrose, was kept in a black case at Durham until destroyed at the reformation.

The pectoral cross was also a reliquary, and that of St. Aidan was long preserved at Durham, while St. Cuthbert's cross is still treasured there.

Pastoral staves were common to all bishops and abbots, and some of these are preserved. The earliest of them have a truncated curve, an incipient volute, which is also seen in the drawings of the Evangelists in the *Book of MacDurnan* at Lambeth. St. Patrick's staff was known as the "Staff of Jesus," and that of St. Kentigern was kept at Ripon until the sixteenth century. Many of the staves were covered with gold and jewels to preserve the originals.

Music and art of their own conventional style attained a high degree amongst these early British christians; harpers and pipers were venerated; they were noted for sculpture and metal castings. Before the invasions of the Northmen most of the Irish churches had costly reliquaries and gospel cases of bronze or silver. Pictured tablets and ornately painted images were in the church of Kildare in the fifth century; and Bede says that beautiful colours were prepared in Ireland.

Reliquaries and bells were also made by these craftsmen; bells were accounted as one of the necessary belongings of a missionary, and quite a number of them are in the custody of various museums. In the ninth and subsequent centuries the Keltic churchmen enclosed the bells of certain saints in decorated metal shrines to preserve them in honour of their saintly owners.

The bells are of a very primitive character, the earlier are merely bent sheet-iron rivetted together, like the Swiss goat bells, but at a slightly later date they were cast in bronze. A bell was given to a bishop at his consecration; Tirechan recounts in the *Book of Armagh* that "Patrick conferred the degree of bishop on him (Fiace, bishop of Sletty) so that he was the first bishop that was ordained among the Lagenians, and Patrick

gave a box to Fiace containing a bell, a menstir (reliquary), a crozier and a poolire (a book satchel), and left seven of his people with him."

Amongst the earliest bells remaining is St. Patrick's (Fig. 49), St. Ninian's, St. Kentigern's, St. Columba's (Fig. 50); another very early example was unearthed from the site of St. Cenan's oratory in Wales.

Mitres, as now known, were not designed in the days of the British Church, but bishops wore a sort of crown,



St. Patrick's Bell.



St. Columba's Bell

FIGS. 49, 50. EARLY KELTIC BELLS.

of which there is a representation sculptured on one of the ruined chapels at Glendalough.

Gildas speaks of organs in the churches, and the Irish Annals, under the year 814, record the destruction of church organs.

With the scant materials available, enough is gathered to show that the Church of the British and the adjacent lands to which it was carried, did its utmost to render Divine Worship devoutly and seemly for the Glory of God.





FIG. 51. SHRINE OF ST. PATRICK'S BELL.

## CHAPTER XX.

### ABSORPTION.

IT is not our province to follow the history of the Keltic Church; its being and its astonishing progress—carrying the Christian message all over the greater and lesser islands of this country, and penetrating far into the Continent—has been reviewed; but the more systematic organisation of the Latin Church prevailed, even as the drilled Roman arms subdued the native races, although in personal bravery the natives were no less courageous than their conquerors.

Whitby saw the virtual collapse of the Keltic Church. Bishop Colman retired from Lindisfarne and went to Ireland, taking with him the whole of the Scotie monks, and about thirty Anglians who had been reared in the school of Holy Island.

Colman built a monastery on the island called Innisboffin, off the coast of Mayo, in which he placed the emigrants; but the Scotie monks neglected their share of the agricultural work and thus aroused discontent in their Anglian brethren. This led Colman to found another monastery in Mayo, on the mainland, to which he removed the more industrious Anglo-Saxons.

Although conforming to the Latin observance of Easter and the tonsure of St. Peter, Ireland preserved its own character for many centuries, persevering in

and bequeathing its peculiar rites and arts to the Anglo-Saxons, who modelled many of their monuments, decorated some of their churches and illumined a few of their manuscripts under its influence. It was not until the twelfth century that the church of Ireland was brought entirely under the obedience of Rome, and this was accomplished by St. Malachy in 1148.

In Scotland the ancient British Church survived in the Culdees, who continued to use the liturgy of which a fragment remains in the *Book of Deer*, which included certain Irish, Mozarabic and Gallican features. Queen Margaret of Scotland made efforts for its abolition in the eleventh century, but the Culdees retained their hereditary abbatial succession until it was gradually absorbed in the diocesan organization of the Latins in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

On the foundation of the see of St. Andrew in 1159 the Culdees voted at the election of the bishop, and continued to exercise that power until 1253. At Aberbrothock the Latin hierarchy was established in 1204, but half of the tithes of that church went to the support of the Culdees, and the abbot succeeded the Keltic coarb in the custody of the Brecebennac, or the banner of St. Columba.

In the passing of the Keltic Church the words of the Venerable Bede may be read as its epitaph; words of an Anglo-Saxon who was wedded to the Latin Church, who wrote of Bishop Colman and his Scotie community at Lindisfarne in the following words:—

“The place (Lindisfarne) which they governed shows how frugal and temperate he (Colman) and his predecessors were, for there were very few houses besides the church found at their departure; indeed, no more than were barely sufficient to make civilized life possible. Also, they had

no money, but only cattle; for if they received any money from rich persons they immediately gave it to the poor; there being no need to gather money nor to provide houses for the entertainment of the great men of the world, for such people never resorted to the church except to pray and hear the Word of God. The king himself, when occasion required, came only with five or six servants, and having performed his devotions in the church, departed. But if it happened that they there partook of a repast, they were satisfied with the plain daily food of the brethren, and required no more. For the whole care of those teachers was to serve God, not the world—to feed the soul, not the belly.

“For this reason the religious habit was at that time held in great veneration; so that wheresoever any clerk or monk went, he was joyfully received by all men as God’s servant. And even if they chanced to meet him upon the road, they ran to him and with bowed head, were glad to be signed with the cross by his hand, or blessed by his lips. Great attention was also paid to their exhortations, and on Sundays the people flocked eagerly to the church or the monasteries, not to feed their bodies, but to hear the Word of God, and if any priest happened to come into a village, the inhabitants came together and asked of him the Word of Life; for the priests and clerks went to the villages for no other reason than to preach, baptise, visit the sick and, in a word, to take care of souls; and they were so free from all taint of avarice that none of them received lands or possessions for the building of monasteries, unless they were compelled to do so by the temporal authorities.”

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